THE Mennonite Quarterly Review

BOARD OF EDITORS
HAROLD S. BENDER, *Goshen College*, Editor

Associate Editors

GUY F. HERSHBERGER, *Goshen College*
EDWARD YODER, *Scottdale, Pa.*
C. HENRY SMITH, *Bluffton, Ohio*
JOHN UMBLE, *Goshen College*
ERNST CORRELL, *Washington, D. C.*
ABRAM WARKENTIN, *Newton, Kansas*
JOHN C. WENGER, *Goshen College*

VOLUME XV JULY, 1941 NUMBER THREE

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 154

THE MENNONITES OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA 155
Edward Yoder

DUTCH MENNONITE DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE FROM PETER PETERS TO JOANNES DEKNATEL, 1625-1753 187
Robert Friedmann

BOOK REVIEWS 208

EDITORIAL

THE RECENT SESQUICENTENNIAL *(1940)* OF THE SCOTTDALE *(PENNSYLVANIA)* Mennonite congregation was the occasion for a celebration at which Dr. Edward Yoder, formerly of the faculty of Goshen College and now on the editorial staff of the Mennonite Publishing House, read a thorough and comprehensive historical paper covering the history of the entire Mennonite settlement in the Scottdale region. This paper will be presented in two installments in the REVIEW, beginning in this issue. While comprehensive regional histories of the two eastern Mennonite conferences of Pennsylvania have been published (Lancaster by M. G. Weaver and Franconia by John C. Wenger) no scholarly work has yet been done on the entire remainder of Pennsylvania Mennonitism. The oldest of the Pennsylvania settlements west of the Lancaster Conference district is that in the region of Scottdale in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties and Dr. Yoder's study is therefore the first step in a history of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Conference district. It is also of particular interest because of the significance for recent Mennonite history of the Mennonite Publishing House, the publishing headquarters of the Mennonite Church in America since 1908, which is located in Scottdale.

THE SECOND MAJOR ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE IS A CHAPTER FROM A NEW AND significant monograph by Dr. Robert Friedmann treating the devotional literature of the Mennonites of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If sufficient subsidy can be secured the entire manuscript will be published in book form by the Mennonite Historical Society during the coming year. It is the fruit of a rewarding year of research by Dr. Friedmann in the rich resources of the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College as Honorary Fellow of the College in Anabaptist-Mennonite History. The monograph breaks new ground in Mennonite historiography and constitutes a further step in Dr. Friedmann's pioneer effort in the field of interpretation of spiritual trends in the four centuries of Mennonite history. The chapter published in this issue treats the significant devotional writings of the leading Dutch Mennonite authors in the golden age of Dutch Mennonitism during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and contains much valuable bibliographical detail in addition to its significant interpretative contributions. The earlier article by Dr. Friedmann on "Anabaptism and Pietism" (in the REVIEW of April and July, 1940) should be read as a background to the present one.

THE
Mennonite Quarterly
Review

Vol XV Number 3

THE MENNONITES OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

EDWARD YODER

Introduction

In southwestern Pennsylvania, not far from the foot of Chestnut Ridge, the most westerly of the Allegheny mountain ranges, was planted one of the earliest, if not the earliest of all, settlements of Mennonite people on the west side of these mountains. About forty miles southeast from Pittsburgh, where the waters of Jacobs Creek separate Westmoreland county from Fayette county which lies to the south of it, the earliest Mennonite pioneers who crossed over the mountains settled down among the hills and hollows of a goodly land. Jacobs Creek flows in an irregular westerly course through the midst of the region which comprised their earliest settlement. This stream empties into the Youghiogheny River ten or more miles farther west.

The early Mennonites found the soil in Jacobs Creek valley fertile and well suited for agricultural use, for they were invariably farmers looking for cheaper land. Water here was plentiful, and timber also. In some ways the aspect of the countryside in this region has been much altered since that early day, chiefly through the

operations carried on in connection with the coal mining and coke manufacturing industries for nearly fifty years, beginning about 1870. Where now one looks upon long stretches of cinder heaps, the unsightly ruins of coke ovens long since abandoned, or fields rendered useless by countless sunken pitholes over old coal mines there were at that time green fields and pleasant woods. The entire area was underlaid with abundant seams of soft coal of the best quality known for the making of coke suitable for use in the manufacture of iron and steel. The earliest pioneers, however, were quite unaware of the buried black treasure they acquired when they first purchased their tracts of land in these parts. Their settlement was right in the midst of what later became known as the famous Connellsville Coal Region.

Before the Mennonite settlers first arrived in this section of Pennsylvania one hundred fifty years ago, this part of the state had already seen twenty or thirty years of civilized history. Sixteen years before their coming sufficient people were living west of Laurel Mountain to require the erection of a local county. Pennsylvania still belonged to the Penns at that time. In 1773 that part of Bedford county which lay west of Laurel Mountain was formed into Westmoreland county, which at first included all of southwestern Pennsylvania west of that ridge.

The earliest settlers in this western region were chiefly the Scotch-Irish who had come here from the northeastern and central counties of Penn's province. They were hardy frontiersmen who were pushing the American frontier farther and farther westward, in some instances they even pushed their settlements ahead of the legal acquisition of the lands through treaties with the Indians. During and after the war of the American Revolution the wave of immigration into this part of the state increased greatly. By the year 1783, about six years before the first Mennonites reached this place, Fayette county was erected out of the southern part of Westmoreland county. At first the Youghiogheny River was established as the boundary between the two counties, but the next year Jacobs Creek was finally fixed upon as the dividing line.

The flow of westward migration in the United States was getting well under way as the eighteenth century was drawing toward its close. The desire for more and cheaper lands as well as the lure of the frontier took possession of many people of all classes. Even con-

servative, peace-loving, and home-loving Mennonites got the fever to go west and grow up with the country. These people, however, were seldom the vanguard of the population tide as it moved westward, but they usually followed closely on the heels of the first pioneers who fought the Indians and planted the seeds of civilization in the vast wilderness of the Ohio River valley and still farther west.

The year 1940 marked the passing of a century and a half in the history of the Mennonites in Jacobs Creek valley. For convenience one may roughly divide the one hundred and fifty years of this history into three parts of approximately fifty years each. There was no single event that sharply marks off the first fifty years from the second. But in general the years from 1790 to 1840 may be characterized as the period of extensive immigration and of growth in the settlement. The second half century, from 1840 to about 1892, in contrast was a period of general decline in the life of the Mennonite congregation, due to the moving away of some and to the fact that many more affiliated themselves with other church bodies. The most recent period, which should strictly be dated from 1892, covers the history of the present Scottdale Mennonite congregation.

Those who engage in the study of the history of early Mennonite settlements in America uniformly lament the fact that Mennonites of earlier generations kept very few written records in their congregations. It is difficult and frequently impossible to reconstruct a picture of the life and activities of the pioneer congregations with any degree of accuracy and completeness. The same holds true also of the Mennonite congregation in the Westmoreland-Fayette settlement. There are no official church records known to be in existence for the first one hundred years of the congregation's history. Numerous family records of Mennonite families have in the past been collected and their histories published. Among these are some of families which have extensive representation in this section. The general histories and the biographical histories of the local counties have been rather carefully prepared, so that it is possible to gather some valuable information from these about the early Mennonite settlers. It is from these general histories and records and from the official archives of the counties in which the settlement is located that the data for the early history of the local Mennonite congregation must be gathered and pieced together. The present discussion of this history is by no means complete and many details still require further

study and investigation. It is in commemoration of one hundred and fifty years of Mennonite history and life in Jacobs Creek valley that this history is here presented.

I. *The Early Period,* 1790-1840

The earliest Mennonite settlers of whom we have knowledge in the valley of Jacobs Creek acquired tracts of land in the years 1789, 1790, and 1791. There were four families of these people that bought land and settled on the south side of the creek in Fayette county, just outside Westmoreland, in the years indicated. The first was Jacob Strickler who in 1789 purchased from Jacob Stewart, his brother-in-law, a tract of 395 acres for the sum of 750 pounds lawful money. This tract was located along the south side of Jacobs Creek, about a mile southwest from where Scottdale is now. Some of this land is now included in the Creekline Farms. It is recorded that this Jacob Strickler built a sawmill and a gristmill along Jacobs Creek, on the site of the later Keister's Mill.[1]

Later in the same year John Stouffer purchased from John Stephenson several hundred acres of land along Jacobs Creek just east and south of Jacob Strickler's tract. His land included the site where the village of Owensdale is now and extended from there eastward. This John Stouffer was not related to the minister Abraham Stauffer who bought land close by the next year. He was probably a son-in-law of the John Shank who six years later bought land in the adjoining township of Bullskin. Shank came here from Hagerstown, Maryland, and John Stouffer was evidently from the same place. He later lived in Bullskin township himself. He and some of his family are buried in the Mt. Pleasant cemetery. In the United States census of 1790 John Stouffer is given as head of a family of eight persons in Tyrone township, Fayette county.

In March, 1790, we find record that Abraham Stauffer, yeoman, of Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, bought from Benjamin Wells a tract of 278 acres of land in Tyrone township, Fayette county. As this piece of land had not before been patented, Abraham Stauffer in September of the same year received a patent for it from the com-

1. The federal census of 1790 records the following heads of families with name Strickler in Tyrone township, Fayette county, Pennsylvania: Jacob Strickler 1st, ten in family; Jacob Strickler, senr, nine in family; Henry Strickler, one; Abraham Strickler, one. *Heads of Families, First Census of the United States: 1790. State of Pennsylvania,* p. 110.

monwealth of Pennsylvania. He had paid Mr. Wells 320 pounds in money for the land.[2] His tract also lay along the south bank of Jacobs Creek, farther to the east and north than the land purchased earlier by Jacob Strickler and John Stouffer. It included the ground whereon the borough of Everson has since been built, and it extended from there to the east and south.

Abraham Stauffer was a Mennonite minister. When and where he was ordained as minister is unknown. It is probable that he had been ordained to that position before he came here from Lancaster county, where according to the family tradition his father had been a preacher before him. Besides being a preacher he also served as an elder or bishop in the congregation. Again there is no record when he was called to this office, whether before leaving his eastern home or after the Mennonite congregation was established in his new home. Abraham Stauffer was accordingly the first Mennonite preacher to buy land and settle in the Jacobs Creek region. The United States census of 1790 gives his household as consisting in that year of nine persons.

The family and descendants of Abraham Stauffer were destined to play a leading and influential part both in the history of the Mennonite congregation of this place and in the industrial and cultural life of the community in general. He had nine children who grew to maturity and married. Unlike as was the case with many of the other pioneer Mennonite families, nearly all the Stauffer children remained in the locality where their father had settled, where they became prominent in business and community affairs. Many later descendants of this pioneer Mennonite preacher have been leaders in church, business, and industrial circles in this and surrounding communities.[3]

---

2. Fayette County Archives, *Deed Book* 174, page 498, and *Deed Book* D, page 366.

3. Abraham Stauffer (1752-1826), was married to Ann Nissley (1752-1817). He was a son of John Stauffer (1733-1811), who married Veronica Buckwalter. His grandfather was Christian Stauffer, an immigrant from the Palatinate in 1749. Two persons by name of Christian Stauffer landed in Philadelphia in that year, one on September 9, the other on September 15 (*Pennsylvania-German Pioneers,* by Strassburger-Hinke (1934), Vol. I, Lists 128C and 133C). Which of these was Abraham Stauffer's grandfather is uncertain. One of these immigrants of 1749 evidently came from Ibersheimerhof in the Palatinate; see "Palatinate Mennonite Census Lists," in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* Vol. XIV (1940), pp. 171, 184. The children of Preacher Abraham Stauffer were: Barbara, married —— Smith; Christian, mrd. Agnes Overholt; Martin, mrd. Elizabeth Overholt; Abraham, mrd. Elizabeth Myers; John, mrd. Catharine Loucks; Maria, mrd. Abraham Overholt; Fannie, mrd. John Tinstman; Anna, mrd. John Sherrick; Elizabeth, mrd. Christian Overholt.

The fourth Mennonite to purchase land here was John Shallenberger. A number of Shallenbergers are listed in the United States census of 1790 as family heads in Fayette county. They were John, David, and Abraham in Bullskin township, and Jacob in Tyrone township. The John mentioned was the father of David and Abraham. What relation Jacob was to these is not clear. John Shallenberger bought of Edward Dyal for six hundred pounds in money 426 acres of land, a tract which included the present site of Pennsville and extended from there westward for about a mile. He purchased this land in 1791. He lived only about two years after that date, for his last will and testament, written January 6, 1793, was probated on March 18 of the same year. Joseph Scherg was one of the witnesses who subscribed the will, and in it Abraham Stauffer and Jacob Strickler, designated as "my good friends," were named as the executors of the will. The large farm was later divided about equally between the two sons, David and Abraham. It is not known where this John Shallenberger was buried. Evidently his death was one of the earliest among the Mennonite settlers, and one conjecture might be that he was buried on the west end of his own farm, and that his resting place became the nucleus for the Mennonite burying ground, beside which a little later was erected the earliest meetinghouse, known as the Pennsville meetinghouse. The location is on the boundary between Bullskin and Tyrone townships, and it lay next to the principal road then running north from a ford of the Youghiogheny River, a road which, according to local tradition, George Washington once traveled.

The first United States census has also the name of Joseph Sharrick as head of a family of seven persons and resident in Tyrone township, Fayette county, in the year 1790.[4] It is not known that he purchased land at an early date. He too was a Mennonite minister,

4. Preacher Joseph Sherrick (1757-1811) married Anna Musser. Their children were: Christian, married Elizabeth Stoner; Peter, mrd. Barbara Funk; Joseph, mrd. Barbara Beitler; Mary, mrd. Abraham Stoner; Catharine; Anna, mrd. Henry Ruth; Susanna, mrd. Christian Funk; Jacob; Henry, mrd. Anna Stauffer. According to local tradition in the Sherrick family, Preacher Joseph Sherrick was son of Joseph Sherrick (1738-1807), who married Susanna Strickler. The latter Joseph came from Switzerland to America with his father, Joseph Scherg (d. 1770), whose wife died at sea. The last named Joseph took up land in Hempfield township, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, on May 27, 1741. If this information is correct, the Joseph Sherrick who settled in Fayette county in 1790 was not born in Switzerland, as has been sometimes stated, he being confused with his father. The exact identification and the relationships of the numerous early Joseph Sherricks of Lancaster county is still partly an unsolved problem among the historians of the family.

but whether ordained to that office before or after coming to this place is unknown. He was accompanied to Fayette county from Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, by his younger brother, John Sherrick. John married Nancy Ann Stauffer, daughter of Preacher Abraham Stauffer, and later he owned land in the same vicinity. Abraham Stauffer and the two Sherrick brothers came to this place from the western part of Lancaster county, the former, it is thought, from East Donegal township, and the Sherricks from either East or West Hempfield township. The Strickler and Shallenberger families undoubtedly came from the same vicinity in Lancaster county.

Other Mennonite families migrated to the two townships of Tyrone and Bullskin south of Jacobs Creek in the years that followed these earliest land purchases. In fact a John Rist is listed as family head in Bullskin township in the United States census of 1790. In 1793 one Christian Rhist from Lancaster county bought land in Tyrone township. Conrad Rist, who was later a minister in the Mennonite congregation, was evidently related to these.[5]

In 1795 John Shank, a Mennonite who had lived near Hagerstown, Maryland, bought extensive tracts of land north of Pennsville. His lands extended east as far as Mounts Creek, where he is said to have erected the first mill on the site of the later Detwiler Mills. In his will, written in 1804, he mentions a mill as a part of his earthly estate. As stated before, the John Stouffer who came to Tyrone township in 1789 was apparently son-in-law of John Shank. The latter, according to a statement in the local county history, was buried in the Mennonite graveyard, although no tombstone today carries any inscription that identifies his last resting place.[6]

Three brothers with the name Newcomer, Christian, John, and Abraham, came with their father Peter Newcomer from Washington county, Maryland, to Tyrone township before 1800. Peter Newcomer was earlier from Lancaster county in Pennsylvania. Peter Galley, who was married to a sister of the Newcomer brothers, settled in the same township.

---

5. A Rist family cemetery is located near Broadford, Pa. The ground for this family burial plot was on the farm of John Rist (1777-1855) of Connellsville township, and was reserved and designated as "a burying ground for the Reist family forever," in a codicil to his will, dated February 4, 1849 (Fayette County Archives, *Will Book* 3, p. 201). Preacher Conrad Reist (1787-1841) is buried in this family plot. Today the burial plot is entirely neglected and all the old headstones are fallen over.

6. Ellis, F., *History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 489.

Still farther to the northeast in Bullskin township, Fayette county, one finds mention of the comparatively early settlement of some Mennonite families. The names of Peter Freed, who died about 1830, Jacob Eshelman, and several Shupes are among those who early developed farms and built mills along Green Lick Run. Still later, about 1827, Henry Detwiler from eastern Pennsylvania became the owner of the mills on Mounts Creek which were built earlier by John Shank and were subsequently known for a long time as Detwiler's Mills. They were located near the site of the present Country Club buildings and the hotel on the Connellsville-Mt. Vernon road. Henry Detwiler is buried in the Pennsville Mennonite burying ground, together with some members of his family.

In a general way it can be said that the Mennonites who lived on the south side of Jacobs Creek, that is in Fayette county, were not as numerous neither were they as closely settled in a compact community as were those on the Westmoreland side of the line, of whom we shall speak presently. They were scattered out over parts of three townships, and southward as far as Broadford and Connellsville. As a matter of fact Preacher Abraham Stauffer himself owned some land late in his life south of the Youghiogheny River in Dunbar township, and a number of his grandchildren lived in that locality. Of the early religious activities among the Mennonites south of Jacobs Creek practically nothing is specifically known. The preachers were Abraham Stauffer and Joseph Sherrick, as mentioned before. As was the custom in pioneer days, meetings for preaching and worship were held at first in the private homes of the members. The tradition exists that the first meetinghouse on the site about a mile west of Pennsville was erected a little before the year 1800. So far it has been impossible to discover any specific records regarding the purchase of the ground used for this churchyard and the cemetery that adjoined it. Judging from the plats of the early land surveys, the location of the meetinghouse was on the land which was included in the original John Shallenberger farm, and evidently on that part of it which later belonged to his son Abraham. The oldest dated marker in the burying ground is inscribed with the date 1811. There are however numerous undated rough stones, some of which certainly mark graves earlier than that date. It is possible that the land was early donated or set aside for its intended purpose without formal record of deed.

The activities of the Mennonite congregation in the earliest days were naturally simple and limited in number. All the services then and for a long time after that were conducted in the German language, and meetings were held probably every two or four weeks. Of the families named before as Mennonites who settled on the south side of Jacobs Creek it is doubtful if the younger members of some of these became active members of the Mennonite congregation. The Shallenbergers lived in the vicinity of Pennsville for some years. Some of them were skilled tanners and makers of leather goods. Among the township officials in the year 1793 and later one finds the names of David and Abraham Shallenberger at various times filling the office of constable, which seems odd, to say the least, on the part of Mennonites. One notes too that in the history of the Pennsville Baptist church, which was started soon after the year 1800 as a sort of union congregation, occur the names of a number of Shallenbergers among the active organizers and supporters. Very similar is the story of the immediate descendants of John Shank near Pennsville, as well as of the Strickler and Newcomer families. It is interesting to observe too that the majority of the early burials in the Pennsville Mennonite cemetery were of the descendants of the Stauffer and the Sherrick families. Evidently these families and their descendants formed a large part of the active Mennonite membership on the south side of Jacobs Creek.

During the last decade of the eighteenth century Mennonite settlers began to come into the southern part of Westmoreland county. They settled mostly in what is now East Huntingdon township on lands lying between the present site of Alverton and Mt. Pleasant on the north and Jacobs Creek on the south. These settlers, many of them at least, like those who had earlier come into Fayette county, brought with them considerable financial capital, and so they were able to purchase the land they desired from the earlier settlers. The Mennonites on the north side of Jacobs Creek came from a number of different counties in eastern and southern Pennsylvania. They were from Bucks, Chester, Berks, Lancaster, Northampton, Bedford, and perhaps other counties. A few families were evidently recent immigrants from Europe.

Some German settlers began acquiring land in this part of Westmoreland county as early as 1790. Michael Shupe bought 151 acres near Mt. Pleasant in 1790. While it is possible that he was a Men-

nonite, it yet appears more likely that he was an adherent of the German Baptists. Some of the Shupes around Mt. Pleasant were very early among the leading supporters of the United Brethren in Christ congregation in that locality.

The first settler in East Huntingdon township who was certainly a Mennonite was George Mumma. In 1794 he purchased 291 acres of land for the sum of 750 pounds in money. His farm was situated a little over a mile north of the present site of Scottdale. His brother David came with him to this township and later he also owned land and resided in the same neighborhood. The Mumma (Mumaw) family came originally from Lancaster county, Pennsylvania.[7]

In the year 1797 at least five Mennonites purchased land in East Huntingdon township. Henry Fox bought 300 acres in that year for 1400 pounds in money, and the next year he added another large tract to his holdings.[8] The same year Martin Overholt bought a tract of land not far from the George Mumma farm. His homestead lay just a short distance south of the present site of West Overton. He was a younger brother of the Henry Overholt who came to the same community from Bucks county three years after Martin's coming. Martin Overholt died in 1813, after he had completed his preparations to move from here to Ohio. Most of his children did move to that state or later to states farther west. Martin Overholt's daughter Elizabeth married Abraham Welty who was one of the early preachers in the Mennonite congregation at this place. Welty moved to Ohio in 1812 where he served as a Mennonite preacher and bishop in Tuscarawas county until his death. Another daughter of Martin Overholt married Christian Stauffer, son of Preacher Abraham Stauffer of Fayette county. Christian Stauffer was the Mennonite deacon in the local congregation in the early part of the nineteenth century.

From Bucks county, in eastern Pennsylvania, the same region from which the Overholt families came, evidently was Henry Rosenberger. He purchased 228 acres of land for 480 pounds in money in 1797. Adam Tinstman with his family in the same year came to

7. A note in the *Herald of Truth*, Vol. XXXV (1898), p. 297, states that the cemetery adjoining the Kraybill Mennonite meetinghouse in Lancaster county was originally the private burying ground of the Mumma family.

8. Six children are named as heirs in the will of Henry Fox (d. 1824). They are: Barbara, mrd. John Strong; John, mrd. (1) Elizabeth Rosenberger, (2) Frederica Caroline Carver; Nancy, mrd. Jacob Tinstman; Christian, mrd. Elizabeth Funk; Maria, mrd. John Funk; Magdalena, mrd. John Stoner.

Westmoreland county. He bought land that year, 204 acres for 942 pounds in money. Jacob Tinstman, perhaps a son or brother of Adam, signed as one of the witnesses to this deed of purchase, and he bought some land for himself in 1801. The Tinstman family was evidently from Bucks county too, for two sons of Adam Tinstman married daughters of Martin Fretz of Tinicum township, Bucks county, Pennsylvania.[9] One of the sons, Mathias, later moved to Columbiana county, Ohio, where he served as a Mennonite preacher from 1819 to 1832. He died in Medina county, Ohio. Also in 1797 Henry Whiteman (Wideman) purchased 149 acres of land for 149 pounds. Nothing further is known of this man, except that he was a trustee of the Mennonite congregation in 1799, the year the first ground was purchased for the use of the congregation.

In 1799 a number of Mennonites made land purchases in the settlement which was developing. Henry Yothers, coming from the eastern part of the state, bought 65 acres of land for the sum of 300 pounds in money. His purchase was situated a little farther east, in Mount Pleasant township. Presumably this was the father of the later Mennonite preacher, Henry Yother, who was ordained minister in 1845. The older Henry died about 1846.

Also in 1799 Christian Stoner came to East Huntingdon township from Bedford county. His father, Abraham Steiner, was an immigrant from Switzerland to America in 1744.[10] Christian Stoner purchased five hundred acres of land a little southwest of the present site of Alverton. He and his descendants owned much land in the vicinity where the village later grew up. The place was long known as Stonerville, being so named from the numerous Stoners who lived near there. It has been renamed Alverton only within the past fifty years. Christian Stoner was himself the first person to erect a sawmill and begin other local industries at the site of Stonerville. He also put up a cabinetmaker's shop, in which craft he was skilled. He is said to have been the first undertaker in the township. Skill in

---

9. Fretz, A. J., *A Brief History of John and Christian Fretz,* (Elkhart, Ind., 1890), pp. 412, 428.

10. Abraham Steiner signed his name on December 22, 1744, as an immigrant on the ship Muscliffe Galley, (Strassburger-Hinke, *Pennsylvania-German Pioneers,* Vol. I, p. 238). He was presumably the father of Christian who came to Westmoreland county. Christian (1757-1814) was married to Barbara Shank (1765-1816). Their children were: John, mrd. Magdalena Fox; Abraham, mrd. Mary Sherrick; Barbara, mrd. John Wurtz; Elizabeth, mrd. Christian Sherrick, a Mennonite preacher; Christian, mrd. Annie Stauffer; Jacob, mrd. (1) Anna Beitler, (2) Sarah Fox; Daniel; Henry; Anna, mrd. John Rudabaugh; David.

cabinetmaking in those days carried with it the business of constructing coffins and of burying the dead. This work seems to have been long continued as a tradition in the Stoner family. A grandson of the pioneer named above, himself named Christian Stoner, a Mennonite deacon, served in the capacity of community undertaker for at least thirty-five years, from about 1855 to 1890. He died in 1892, and in his obituary it is reported that he had buried near a thousand people in his lifetime.[11] Most of the early Stoner families remained residents of the locality where their ancestor had settled, and where his descendants have played an influential part in the development of the community.

Thus during the last years of the century, as has been pointed out, the influx of Mennonites into East Huntingdon township had grown into a good-sized stream. The year 1800 saw that stream grow still larger, when more families, especially from Bucks county, Pennsylvania, came into the settlement. David Strohm bought land in 1800. The Strohm family came from Germany to this community, it is reported, after a stay of just a few years in eastern Pennsylvania. David Funk, the third Mennonite preacher to come to the settlement and the first one to settle in Westmoreland county, arrived in 1800. He located on a farm not far from where Alverton is now, being a near neighbor to Christian Stoner and George Mumaw who were located here before he came. Preacher David Funk died in 1833. Some of his children married members of the Fox and Sherrick families. Most of them later moved out of the state and cast their lot with other denominational bodies, some with the Church of God (Winebrennarian), and some with the German Baptists.[12]

The year 1800 marked also the coming to this region of the second large Oberholzer family, generally known here as Overholt. This was Henry Oberholzer, brother to the Martin Overholt before mentioned. Their father, Martin Oberholzer, was a native of Germany who migrated to America in the early part of the eighteenth century and settled in Bucks county, Pennsylvania.[13] Henry, like his brother Martin, was no longer a young man at the time of his coming to East Huntingdon township. He too had a large family of

---

11. *Herald of Truth,* Vol. XXIX (1892), p. 78.

12. Fretz, A. J., *A Brief History of Bishop Henry Funck* (Elkhart, Ind., 1899), pp. 28f.

13. Fretz, A. J., *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Martin Oberholtzer,* (Milton, N. J., 1903), pp. 1, 2.

grown children, some of whom were already married and possessed families of their own. The Oberholzers were a prolific and hardy clan. Martin Overholt had fourteen children, most of whom married and reared families averaging only slightly smaller in size than their father's. Henry, many of whose descendants still reside in this and near-by localities, had twelve children, most of whom enjoyed generous families too. The Overholts settled in the vicinity where West Overton is now, then a place about three miles southwest from Mt. Pleasant.

Henry Oberholzer and his family founded the village of West Overton. He laid out his new homestead on the site of the present Historical House at West Overton. He had been a landowner and extensive farmer in Bucks county before coming to Westmoreland county. His homestead there was located next to the Deep Run Mennonite meetinghouse, in Bedminster township. He sold that estate, it is said, for "1500 pounds gold and silver money." Then loading his entire family of wife, five sons, seven daughters, five sons-in-law, two daughters-in-law, and thirteen grandchildren, together with a great quantity of goods and chattels upon a string of covered wagons, he set out upon the long journey of three hundred miles to the new land on the other side of the mountains. It was in the summer of 1800 that this company of some thirty souls reached East Huntingdon township. Henry, the father of the company, at once bought several hundred acres of land which he had selected and proceeded to build a new homestead to replace the one he had left behind in Bucks county. His married sons and daughters settled on lands near by and around their father's place, and they all set about to improve their farms and build homes for themselves.

The coming of the Overholt families brought into the Mennonite settlement in Jacobs Creek valley a number of family names that have since figured prominently in the local history and in the history of the Mennonite congregation. Agnes, a daughter of Henry Oberholzer, was married to Christian Fretz, and they were the progenitors of the people of that name in this area. Anna, another daughter of the same pioneer, was the wife of Peter Loucks, and she was the ancestress of the Loucks descendants in this region. Another daughter, Barbara, was married to Jacob Durstine. Three of the younger children of Henry Oberholzer married members of Preacher Abraham Stauffer's family after coming here.

The Peter Loucks mentioned above lived for the first year after his arrival in the settlement on the south side of Jacobs Creek, but the next year, in 1801, he bought land on the north side of this stream. Through this purchase and later ones by which he added to his acres, Peter Loucks in the course of time became owner of most of the land now covered by the borough of Scottdale, as well as of much besides. This pioneer Loucks was father of the later minister in the Mennonite congregation, named Martin Loucks. Martin's sons, Peter S. Loucks and Jacob S. Loucks, owned their grandfather's original farm, purchased in 1801, at the time the town of Scottdale was first laid out in 1872.[14] The pioneer Loucks was great-grandfather of the older generation of the Loucks name who are today members of the Scottdale Mennonite congregation.

One son of Henry Oberholzer was named Jacob. He is said to have been a skilled veterinarian and lived on a farm between West Overton and where Scottdale is now. Jacob Overholt was the father of the later preacher and elder John D. Overholt (1797-1878), who served the Mennonite congregation here as one of its ministers for nearly fifty years, from 1830 to 1878. The next to the youngest of the sons of Henry Oberholzer was Abraham Overholt. In the course of time he became the owner of the homestead of his father at West Overton. Abraham Overholt was an enterprising farmer and business man. He is credited with being the first discoverer and user of coal in this part of Westmoreland county. As early as 1810 he established on his farm a small still for the making of distilled liquor. Twenty years later a flouring mill was added to his industries, and the use of steam power was first introduced by him at the same time. The superior quality of Abraham Overholt's products, so it is said, made his business prosper and grow steadily. Later some of his sons, nephews, and grandsons carried on this man's business on still greater scale.[15] At Broadford in Fayette county, and at other points in Western Pennsylvania the Overholt distilleries still continue to operate.

This Abraham Overholt was during his whole lifetime a leading member of the Mennonite congregation, and he served at different

14. Albert, G. D., *History of the County of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania,* (1882), p. 682; Boucher, John N., *Old and New in Westmoreland,* (1918) Vol. II, p. 558; *History of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania,* (1906) Vol. I, p. 576.

15. Albert, *op. cit.,* pp. 688-690.

times as one of the trustees of the congregation.[16] None of his children, however, seem to have united with their parents' congregation.[17] The fact that a leading member of the Mennonite congregation was the founder of an extensive distilling business, and that his portrait still adorns the trade labels and advertisements of the product of this industry may be thought to reflect poor credit on the Mennonites, who are today among the foremost advocates of the teaching and practice of temperance and of total abstinence from strong drink. Yet it is only fair to say that even as recently as one hundred years ago the present-day emphasis on temperance teaching and the present well-known Christian attitude toward the use of alcoholic liquor were practically unknown. Among the Mennonite ancestors who migrated from Europe the business of making distilled liquor was considered quite as legitimate and necessary a community enterprise as that of milling flour, strange as that idea may seem to us today. In the absence of the medical knowledge of today, distilled liquors had to serve too as medicine for many ailments from which the people suffered. And lastly it was easier to transport to the far-off markets the produce of the farms in the form of distillates than in the much bulkier form of grain.

---

16. An obituary of Abraham Overholt was published in the *Herald of Truth,* Vol. VII, p. 47. It is there stated that he was buried in the Mennonite burying ground in East Huntingdon township. His remains were evidently removed later and laid to rest in the Mt. Pleasant cemetery where simple markers indicate the resting place of him and his wife. A later biographer of his grandson, Henry Clay Frick, refers to Abraham Overholt as the "squire of Westmoreland county" (quoted in *Dictionary of American Biography,* Vol. VII, p. 29).

17. A number of Abraham Overholt's descendants became outstanding leaders in the business and industrial life of western Pennsylvania. The coal mining industry, with the associated business of manufacturing coke and smelting iron ore, began to be developed in Fayette and Westmoreland counties in an extensive way about 1870. Two prominent men whose names are associated with the history of these industries were Abraham O. Tinstman and Henry Clay Frick, both of them grandsons of Abraham and Maria (Stauffer) Overholt. Abraham O. Tinstman (b. 1834), son of Anna Overholt and John Tinstman, organized and built the Broadford-Mt. Pleasant railroad in 1870, mainly to provide transportation facilities for the local coal and coke industries which were just then opening up. The railroad was later sold to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, which still operates it. Mr. Tinstman dealt extensively in coal lands, from which he made a fortune.

Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919) was the son of Elizabeth Overholt and John W. Frick. He with his cousin Abraham O. Tinstman and others organized the H. C. Frick Coal Company in 1871. Mr. Frick carried on extensive business operations in western Pennsylvania, being closely associated with Andrew Carnegie. He was a shrewd business man, and the company of which he was the head became the largest coke producing company in the world. In 1889 he controlled 35,000 acres of coal lands and operated 15,000 coke ovens, representing two-thirds of the capacity of the entire Connellsville region. His fortune at his death was estimated at one hundred millions.

A few more of the early settlers whose families contributed to the growth of the Mennonite congregation may be briefly mentioned. In the year 1801 Abraham Ruth purchased 145 acres of land for 218 pounds money. His farm lay next to Christian Stoner's land on the west. Another Mennonite family that early settled in East Huntingdon township was that of John Wurtz. He bought land in 1802, acquiring 309 acres for the sum of 1200 pounds in money. Other family names which in the early years appeared among the members of the Mennonite congregation in this township were Bare, Bachtel, Bossler, Dillinger, Landis, Lane, Myers.

It is in part possible to imagine what the daily life of the early Mennonite settlers may have been like as they labored in the new country to acquire lands and build homes. Life was simple on the frontier here, as it always was under similar circumstances. As to the religious life of the people, we are also left largely to the fertility of our imagination for picturing to ourselves the religious activities which were carried on in the settlement. We know that by the time Mennonite settlers in any numbers began purchasing land north of Jacobs Creek the meetinghouse near Pennsville in Fayette county may already have been built, although the exact date of its erection is not known.

By the time the Mennonite preacher, David Funk, bought his land in East Huntingdon township in 1800, some steps had already been taken toward providing a location for a house of worship in this township. The need for a burying ground perhaps necessitated the earliest steps toward the acquisition of a plot of ground as the property of the congregation. On March 21, 1799, there is record of the first ground purchased by the trustees of the Mennonite congregation. The site was chosen near the foot of a high hill on the north side of the road that ran west from Mt. Pleasant to Smith's Ferry, now Smithton. The village of Stonerville later grew up at this place, which is about three miles from Mt. Pleasant. The trustees of the congregation, Henry Wideman and Adam Tinnsman, bought about an acre and a half of ground from Mathias Kamp and Elizabeth his wife for five pounds in money "for the use of a Mennonist Meetinghouse, Buriel Ground and School House forever."[18]

Exactly how soon after the purchase of this ground the meetinghouse was erected upon it is not certainly known. It was presumably

18. Westmoreland County Archives, *Deed Book* 7, page 197.

not long after the time of the purchase, likely the next year, in 1800. One notes that according to the deed of purchase a schoolhouse was contemplated as part of the congregation's equipment, and it seems safe to assume that a school was conducted on these premises during the early years, likely until the time when the public school system was established in East Huntingdon township about thirty-five years later. The practice of having a schoolhouse beside the meetinghouse was customary in the Mennonite settlements in eastern Pennsylvania in those days.[19] The Funks and Oberholzers, coming as they did from the eastern part of the state, where the tradition of the life and work of a Mennonite teacher like Christopher Dock was well known, doubtless were interested in perpetuating the same educational tradition in the new settlement west of the mountains. Who the teachers were that taught in the schoolhouse at this place remains unknown.

During the early years of the nineteenth century some of the Mennonite ministers in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, kept in touch with the congregations in the newer settlements of Mennonites in the central and western counties of the state. The distance from their county to Westmoreland and Fayette counties was over two hundred miles. And while exact names and dates are not on record of visits made in the Jacobs Creek region by Mennonite preachers from Lancaster county, nevertheless it is certainly true that there were those among them who made the sacrifices and endured the hardships of leaving home and travelling on horseback over dangerous, difficult mountain roads these hundreds of miles to minister to the spiritual needs of the scattered congregations and members. In a general way the Mennonite congregations in western Pennsylvania, including that in Jacobs Creek valley, were considered to be under the jurisdiction of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference. This remained true for about eighty years, or until the district conference of southwestern Pennsylvania was separately organized. It is a matter of regret that more detailed records of the early ministerial visits do not exist.

It so happens that there are in existence still some interesting personal letters by one Martin Mellinger, a Mennonite deacon of Lampeter township, Lancaster county, written to relatives in Ger-

19. Wenger, John C., *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference,* (Scottdale, Pa., 1937), pp. 300-310.

many in the early part of the nineteenth century.[20] In these a few very interesting side lights on the congregation in Jacobs Creek valley are to be found. Martin Mellinger was frequently a travelling companion and assistant to the bishop Peter Eby of Pequea, Lancaster county, in visiting the scattered congregations.[21] In his letters, among many other matters, Martin Mellinger describes some of the ministerial activities and the itinerant work that was carried on by the Mennonite preachers of that time. Some of the hardships they endured in the course of their travels are vividly described by him.

In the year 1825 Eby and Mellinger visited the small congregation, then but lately organized, at Morrison's Cove in what is now Blair county, Pennsylvania. It is possible that they travelled yet farther west on that occasion, even as far as Westmoreland county, although there is no direct evidence that they did so. The ministers of Westmoreland and Fayette counties also kept in direct touch with the older congregations in the eastern settlements, especially those from where they had come originally. It is mentioned in the Mellinger letters, for instance, that Abraham Stauffer of Jacobs Creek in the year 1824 was visiting in Lancaster county. If at the age of seventy-two years, just two years before his death, Preacher Stauffer made a visit to that county, it is only natural to think that he probably travelled back and forth numerous times between Jacobs Creek and Lancaster county during the thirty-six years that he lived in Fayette county. On the occasion mentioned in the letters, of his visit there in 1824, and upon the request of the Lancaster ministers, Abraham Stauffer came home by the way of Morrison's Cove and ministered to the congregation there, which had been organized earlier that same year by ministers from Lancaster county. Stauffer baptized nine persons and held communion services during his stop at Morrison's Cove on the way home.[22]

Martin Mellinger makes several other references to Jacobs Creek in his letters. He says in one letter that some time before the year

---

20. "The Correspondence of Martin Mellinger," translated and edited by Harold S. Bender, in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* Vol. V (1931), pp. 42-64. References to Jacobs Creek occur on pages 53, 56, 57, 62, of the above article.

21. Landis, Ira D., "Bishop Peter Eby of Pequea," *Menn. Qr. Rev.* Vol. XIV (1940), pp. 41-51.

22. This is the direct evidence that Abraham Stauffer was an elder or bishop. The congregation at Morrison's Cove had a resident minister and deacon, and the fact that Stauffer was sent there to hold the special services proves that he was a bishop.

1803 the Skippack brethren and the Lancaster brethren were engaged upon the task of compiling hymns from different sources for the making of a new Mennonite hymnbook. Numerous suggestions and hymn selections, he tells his correspondent, had also been received for the proposed hymnbook from places as far away as Virginia and Jacobs Creek. It appears therefore that the early Mennonites west of the mountains were actively interested in the promotion of singing and church music. It turned out, Mellinger says, that there were so many different hymns suggested for inclusion in the new hymnbook that the conjoint committee from Skippack and from Lancaster, when they met to decide upon the final selections, could not agree on how to proceed. It was agreed therefore to allow each section to go ahead and print their own hymnbook as they saw fit. The hymnbook which was subsequently published by the Skippack brethren in 1803 was entitled, *Die Kleine Geistliche Harfe der Kinder Zions.*[23] The Lancaster brethren printed their hymnbook a year later, in 1804, entitled *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch.* The former of these, *Kleine Geistliche Harfe,* seems to have been the one used by the congregation in Westmoreland county.[24]

As part of the picture of the development of the Mennonite congregation in Jacobs Creek valley in the first half of the nineteenth century, one must keep in mind the constant movement of population in the country at that time. By the year 1815 the tide of migration into the state of Ohio began to get under way. Numbers of the Mennonite settlers or of descendants whose parents had settled here twenty years before now joined in the wholesale trek westward in the quest for newer and cheaper lands. And although some were still moving into this locality from the eastern counties during the first half of the century, the congregation did not increase so rapidly in numbers as might be expected. A passing reference to several local families and their migratory movements, as examples, will indicate something of how the people were at that time scattering out and moving freely from here to other places. An illustration is

23. Wenger, *op. cit.,* pp. 312-314. Skippack in these citations refers to the Mennonite conference in the eastern counties of the state, now known as the Franconia Mennonite Conference.

24. Through the courtesy of Miss Florence Loucks, Scottdale, Pa., the Historical Library of the Mennonite Publishing House recently received a copy of the *Kleine Geistliche Harfe,* second edition (1811), which once belonged to Daniel Fretz (1792-1873) of East Huntingdon township and was neatly inscribed by him on the date of his baptism, May 1, 1814.

the family of David Funk, the Mennonite elder from Bucks county, who settled here in 1800. Of his eight children who married and had families, only one or two lived in Pennsylvania at the time of their death. A number of them moved to Wayne county, Ohio, and some to other counties of the same state.[25] The family of Martin Overholt, mentioned above, is another typical illustration of the same migratory movement. The family of Preacher Joseph Sherrick experienced the same scattering out to a lesser extent. One branch of the Loucks family settled in Indiana. Some of the Mumaws moved into Holmes and Tuscarawas counties in Ohio. And so the story could be continued of Weltys, Tinstmans, Overholts, and others from this congregation migrating and settling in Butler county, Pennsylvania, in Mahoning, Wayne, Tuscarawas, Seneca counties in Ohio, and at various points in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa.

By the year 1840, which in this discussion has been rather arbitrarily set as the end of the earliest period of the Mennonite congregation in Jacobs Creek valley, the circumstances of the Mennonites in this section as far as we know them, may be briefly summarized. The earliest incoming Mennonites had been busy with the temporal occupations of building their homes, improving their lands, establishing various local and community industries. Economic opportunities were abundant. The Mennonite congregation had been growing steadily though slowly in the size of its membership, however with much shifting of population, since the people were moving in and out of the settlement continually. Meanwhile the members who stayed and became established in the locality attained to competency and independence of economic standing during these first fifty years of the history. It appears that in those years there was no closely organized congregational life such as is familiar in connection with a congregation today. The Mennonites who lived in the community went to meeting every two weeks, or as frequently

25. A story related of John Funk, son of Bishop David Funk of Westmoreland county, illustrates how Mennonites sometimes became affiliated with other bodies. John Funk moved from here to Wayne county, Ohio, in 1826. He was evidently a religious man, for he built what he called a "Mennonite church" on his own farm, in which he did the preaching himself. Before long his congregation began to complain that he preached too much like the Methodists. But since he owned the church, the dissatisfied ones had to go elsewhere for their worship. Later the Reverend John Winebrenner came into that community and preached in Funk's church, with the result that Funk and his flock joined the Church of God sect, and he continued as a prominent preacher in that denomination to the end of his life. *(Brief History of Henry Funck,* p. 28).

as was convenient. The entire body of communicants in the settlement considered themselves as one congregation that held its biweekly meetings alternately at the two meetinghouses, the one near Pennsville and the other located about five miles northwest from that place, at Stonerville. Baptismal services, in case there were applicants for membership, and communion services were held at least every spring. It seems not to have been the practice then to have any regular or formal transfer of membership from the congregations whence the members came in the East to the congregation at this place. That at least is the idea one gets from reading the obituary of a lady named Catharine Oberholtzer, who died in Westmoreland county in 1866.[26] The information is there given that the deceased was a member of the Deep Run Mennonite church, although she had in fact moved with her husband to Westmoreland county in 1802, and had therefore lived here for sixty-five years before her death. Perhaps the people considered themselves members of the congregation where they had been baptized as long as they lived, regardless of where they resided.

By the year 1840 the older generation of ministerial leadership had about all passed away. Joseph Sherrick died in 1811; Abraham Stauffer died in 1826; David Funk passed away in 1833; Conrad Reist in 1841; Christian Sherrick died a little after that, in 1845. Preacher Abraham Welty had moved to Ohio in 1812. But younger ministers were already ordained to take the place of those who had passed away. John D. Overholt, grandson of Henry Overholt who came here in 1800, was ordained as preacher in 1830, and three years later to the office of elder or bishop. Martin Loucks who was brought to this locality in 1800 at the age of eighteen months, was ordained as preacher in 1833. In 1843 Henry B. Moyer was ordained as minister at this place, but the next year he moved away, returning to the Deep Run congregation in Bucks county, where he spent the rest of his life.[27] The deacon in the congregation in the early part of the century was Christian Stauffer, son of the pioneer minister and elder Abraham Stauffer.[28]

---

26. *Herald of Truth* Vol. IV (1867), p. 14.

27. Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

28. The direct evidence that Christian Stauffer was deacon rests on two points: first, the *Herald of Truth* Vol. IX (1872), p. 127, has the obituary of "Nancy, second wife of the late deacon Christian Stauffer"; second, on the headstone which marks his grave in the Alverton cemetery is the inscription, "Elder Christian Stauffer." It is

II. *Middle Period,* 1840-1892

The decade from 1840 to 1850, which may be considered as the beginning of the second period of the history of the Mennonite congregation in Jacobs Creek valley, marked the high point in its numerical size and prosperity. After 1850 the decline set in gradually, until in another half century the membership of the congregation had dwindled down to twenty persons or less. The actual membership at the time of the congregation's greatest prosperity has been estimated to have been two hundred or more.

One sign of the growth of the congregation up to that time is the fact that new brick meetinghouses were built, both at Pennsville and at Stonerville, which replaced the original log or wooden structures erected forty and fifty years earlier. At Stonerville two small additions were made to the ground owned by the congregation, chiefly to enlarge the burying ground. The trustees who negotiated the purchases were John Stoner, Christian Fox, and Abraham Overholt. On November 14, 1842, they bought one addition from Samuel Dillinger for the sum of thirty-one dollars and twenty-five cents. A year and a half later they bought the other addition from Michael Moyer for seventeen dollars. The year given as the date of erecting the new meetinghouse at Stonerville is 1841, and for that near Pennsville is 1852.

There were a few officials of the congregation who were called to their office during the early part of this second period. In 1845 Henry Yother was ordained as minister in the congregation, and in 1857 he was ordained to the office of elder or bishop. In 1865 he moved away from the community. The successor to deacon Christian Stauffer was Christian Stoner, grandson of the Christian Stoner who was a pioneer in East Huntingdon township. Stoner was called to the office of deacon some time before 1860, as nearly as is known. There was also a minister in the congregation by name of John Snider, who was active as a preacher around the middle of the century. Further data on his life and ministry are not available. In 1865 a young preacher, named Jonas Blauch, from Somerset county,

---

assumed that "elder" here stands for deacon. For evidence that among Mennonites of that period the deacon was sometimes called "elder" see Wenger, *op. cit.,* p. 363. A deacon is also designated as "ein Aeltester" in a manuscript Mennonite Minister's Manual written by Daniel Good (d. 1850), bishop of the Mennonite Church in Virginia, a copy of which is in the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. It seems that no trace of the fact that Christian Stauffer was a deacon has survived in the local traditions of the Mennonite congregation at Scottdale.

Pennsylvania, moved into the community to assist in the ministerial work. Thirteen years later he moved away again.

There were various causes for the slow and steady decline in membership after 1850. Some factors which contributed to the unfortunate result may be briefly stated. The leadership was evidently lacking in initiative and the conservative traditions were continued with too much tenaciousness. The German language was continued too long after the membership had changed to the use of English in everyday life. The present public school system was inaugurated in East Huntingdon township about 1834. The Mennonites evidently patronized the public schools from that time forth. Among the early school directors for the township one reads the names Overholt, Tinsman, and others that suggest persons from Mennonite families. Naturally the young people from that time forward received practically all their education in the English language. They were no longer taught regularly to read and comprehend the Bible in German, and therefore the German religious services became less and less interesting to them. Preacher Jonas Blauch was able to preach in English as well as in German, yet his efforts failed to stem the tide of decline in the congregation. Many lost interest in the congregation of their fathers. The leaders of the congregation were not aggressive in their methods, as compared with the preachers and evangelists of the newer sects that started up shortly before that time. No Sunday school was conducted in the congregation until 1894. One result of this situation was that the younger people were not gathered into the fellowship of the congregation. Numbers of them found their way into other church bodies. Not infrequently entire families withdrew from the Mennonite congregation and affiliated themselves with another denomination. And as the older generation that remained died off the congregation steadily dwindled in numbers.

In order to gain a little insight into the reasons for the loss of members from the Mennonite congregation to some of the newer Christian sects or denominations, one needs to understand somewhat the general religious movements of that era in the United States. The Mennonites were among the very oldest of the Protestant religious bodies. They ranked with the Lutheran and Reformed denominations in point of age and historic tradition. Furthermore the Mennonites were very conservative in their forms of

worship and they had no specially trained ministry. As a body they were unable in many of the newer settlements to hold their own against the aggressive efforts of the evangelistic type of religious sects when these began to swarm over the frontier as a result of the widespread Wesleyan revivalism of the period. Three of the sects that figured particularly among the Mennonite population of the Jacobs Creek area were the Church of God (Winebrennarian), the United Brethren in Christ, and the Evangelical Association. The first of these had originated through one John Winebrenner (1797-1860), a German Reformed minister of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who had taken up with the Methodistic style of evangelism much to the embarrassment of his Reformed brethren, with the result that they finally dismissed him. The United Brethren in Christ regard Philip William Otterbein (1726-1813) as their originator. He was a German Reformed missionary who came from Germany to America and after his arrival here was taken in by the fervor of the Methodist revivalism. Only at the end of his life did he authorize the founding of a new denomination, when shortly before his death he ordained three men as ministers, among them Christian Newcomer of Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. The Evangelical Association, as it was then called, goes back for its origin to a Lutheran pastor by name of John Albright (1759-1808). These preachers and their associates had become dissatisfied with their own conservative church bodies, which they believed to be lacking in spiritual vitality. The new sects they started were part of the aftermath of the Great Awakening in America in the late eighteenth century.

It is well to appreciate the fact that the Great Awakening of that early era, which resulted from the preaching of George Whitefield and the Methodist evangelists, was a great religious blessing to this country in the pioneer stage of its development. It was the great wave of religious revivalism which swept over the American frontier that brought the Christian faith among the people who settled in the regions west of the Allegheny Mountains. Had it not been for the preaching labors of men like Francis Asbury, Peter Cartwright, and the numerous circuit riding preachers of that day the Middle West might easily have been far more pagan than it has been so far. The waves of revivalism were an integral part of American frontier life. They touched and quickened the life of many of the older denominations. Ministers like Winebrenner, Otterbein,

Albright, and even a Mennonite preacher like Martin Boehm[29] in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, when they took up the newer methods found themselves unwelcome in their own churches. It is regarded as unlikely that any of the first three men just mentioned would have fathered separate sects even then, had it not been for Bishop Asbury's reluctance to accept German-speaking congregations into the Methodist organization. The three bodies, Church of God, United Brethren in Christ, Evangelical Association, for the origin of which they were responsible, were essentially Methodists in faith and practice, except that at the time they started they were Germans who wished to build up German-speaking congregations. The net result was that each movement in the course of time became a denomination in itself, though they early gave up the use of the German language.

The preachers of these German-speaking bodies carried on their labors at first especially among the German-speaking population of Pennsylvania and Maryland. For this reason the settlements of Dunkards, Mennonites, and Amish, along with German Lutheran and German Reformed communities, proved to be specially fertile fields for their endeavors. The fact that today all three of the church bodies above mentioned are well represented by numbers of congregations in Jacobs Creek valley and adjoining communities is the proof that their early preachers labored here with effective results. They were live and aggressive, conducted revivals and prayer meetings, stressed the type of inner religious experience which the pioneer settlers found satisfying amid the cultural loneliness of frontier life. They won many to their fellowship here as elsewhere in Mennonite communities.

Among the early United Brethren preachers was Martin Boehm, who had been a Mennonite minister in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. At the close of his life Boehm seems to have adhered to the Methodists. Another of their most active early evangelists was Christian Newcomer. He had been reared in a Mennonite home in Lancaster county. He travelled extensively in later years to preach in Mennonite and other German-speaking communities. In his journal Newcomer recorded a number of visits he made in Westmoreland county. One entry in 1800 is as follows: "From thence

---

29. Weaver, M. G., *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference* (Scottdale, Pa., 1931), pp. 103-105. Gerberich, A. H., *The Brenneman History* (Scottdale, Pa., 1938), pp. 396, 397.

I came to Mr. George Mumaw's, a relation of mine in Westmoreland county, and stayed for the night." In 1803, 1809, and later he preached again in the vicinity of Mt. Pleasant.[30] The names of Mennonite descendants in this region are frequently found among the early organizers and supporters of the local United Brethren congregations as, for example, at Mt. Pleasant, Fairview, Mt. Olive, Mt. Nebo, and others. It is notable too that comparatively few of the families of Mennonite descendants who moved from Westmoreland and Fayette counties to states farther west seem to have helped build up permanent Mennonite congregations in the places where they settled. Instead one finds them in large numbers helping to build up congregations of United Brethren, and of other bodies.

How early the Winebrennarian preachers labored among the Mennonite population in Jacobs Creek valley is uncertain. By 1840 there was a small congregation of the Church of God people at Old Bethany, a few miles north of Stonerville, and another in what was called the Landis neighborhood, south of Stonerville. Later the two were combined into one congregation at Stonerville, where their preaching services were at the first held in the Mennonite meetinghouse, before their own house of worship was built.[31] Today there are large congregations of the Church of God denomination at Alverton and Mt. Pleasant. Not much is known about the early work of the Evangelical Association in this section. When the Paradise Evangelical Church in Bullskin township, Fayette county, was first built, the Stouffers in that vicinity figured prominently in its organization. Descendants from Mennonite settlers also figured in other church organizations in this and near-by communities, notably in the Pennsville Baptist, before mentioned, the Jacobs Creek Methodist, the Bethel Church of Christ, as well as other churches located in Scottdale and Mt. Pleasant.

Bearing in mind therefore the religious activity of the newer denominations, the natural conservatism of the Mennonite body, the

30. Albert, *op. cit.*, p. 261. The vicinity of Mt. Pleasant was in the early days a particularly active center for the United Brethren in Christ in this part of Pennsylvania. Their first general ministerial conference was held there in 1815, in the old Bonnett schoolhouse about two miles east of the borough. A small marble marker today preserves the memory of the occasion. Their first attempt to establish a church college, or institute as it was then called, was made at Mt. Pleasant in 1850. After five years the project was discontinued there and the school transferred to Westerville, Ohio, where Otterbein College was established.

31. *Scottdale* (Pa.) *Independent-Observer*, November 10, 1939.

migration of many to other places, the decline of the Mennonite congregation can be better understood. There can be no doubt that Mennonite ministers from different places travelled and visited back and forth between the various settlements and congregations during the period around the middle of the century, just as has been noted that they did in the early part of the century. Exactly how much of this interchange of visits was carried on it is difficult to say. The records are very meager. Beginning in 1864 the records become more numerous, for in that year the first denominational periodical was started when John F. Funk, then of Chicago, began publishing the *Herald of Truth* for circulation among Mennonites.

It is significant that from its very first year of publication there were reported in the *Herald of Truth* the visits of travelling ministers in Westmoreland and Fayette counties. It will be of interest to note those visits which are reported in the *Herald,* for they do give one some conception of the activities of Mennonite ministers and particularly of some who visited the congregation in Jacobs Creek valley during the twenty-five years from 1865 to 1890. By implication one can also therefrom have an idea of such visits to this place earlier than 1865. It must be borne in mind too that not all such visits were reported in print, and that there may have been more ministers who stopped in Westmoreland county than are reported in the denominational publication. In passing it may be noted that so far as the reports in the *Herald of Truth* go, the ministers at this place, Martin Loucks and John D. Overholt, who were both quite old at this time, seem no longer to have travelled any distance for preaching in other congregations. Their presence at Masontown, Pennsylvania, is referred to, but not elsewhere. When they were younger men they no doubt travelled farther afield for preaching among Mennonite congregations. Of John D. Overholt it is known that at one period of his career as a bishop he made annual trips of considerable distance in the performance of his duties as an elder. It is said that these journeys took him as far west as Columbiana county, Ohio.

Beginning in 1864, some of the visiting and travelling ministers who reported visits to Westmoreland county were the following: In November, 1864, David Sherk of Berlin, Ontario, stopped in this vicinity. He wrote of it as follows[32]: "From here we went to Brad-

32. *Herald of Truth* Vol. I (1864), p. 80.

ford Station, Fayette county, from there to Abraham Oberholzer's in Westmoreland county, where we again stopped and in an entirely strange neighborhood were received in a very friendly manner. And after a visit and meeting, as usual, we again left this neighborhood on Friday the 20th." Samuel Blough of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, reported a visit he made to Westmoreland county in October, 1866. John M. Brenneman of Elida, Ohio, reported a visit he made in Westmoreland, Fayette, Somerset, and Cambria counties, Pennsylvania, in May and June, 1869. He ends his report with some sober remarks on the worldly attitudes he observed among some of the people in the places he visited.[33]

Daniel Brenneman and Joseph Sommers, from Indiana, visited Masontown, West Overton, and Johnstown in Pennsylvania in November, 1871.[34] Jonas Blauch, the minister who lived in this vicinity from 1865 to 1878, wrote a note for the *Herald of Truth* specially for the benefit of travelling ministers as follows[35]: "We have here two meetinghouses and three ministers. We have meeting every Sabbath. Names and addresses of ministers: John D. Overholt, Martin Long, Martin Blauch, West Overton, Westmoreland county, Pa. Ministers travelling west on the Pennsylvania R. R. will stop at Greensburg and take the stage to Mount Pleasant, where they will inquire for John D. Overholt. Those travelling east from Pittsburgh on the Connellsville R. R. will stop at Bradford and inquire for Jonas Blauch, who lives about three miles north of that place, on the Pottsburg road, and will be happy to entertain them."

The mention of "meeting every Sabbath" in the above quotation is of interest. Evidently beside Blauch's preaching in English, the attempt made at that time to revive the life of the congregation included also the holding of religious services every Sunday for a time. Of course, the meeting every Sunday was held alternately at the two meetinghouses. The implication of Preacher Blauch's statement seems to be that the practice at this time was a departure from the earlier custom of holding meeting every two weeks alternately at the two houses. How long the weekly services were continued is un-

---

33. *Ibid.*, Vol. III (1866), p. 97; Vol. VI (1869), p. 104.

34. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII (1871), p. 188.

35. *Ibid.*, Vol. III (1866), p. 88. Evidently the typesetters had difficulty in making out the handwriting, judging from the errors in this note; "Long" is for Loucks, the second "Martin" should be Jonas, and "Pottsburg" is for Pittsburgh.

known. Probably not for long, since the older custom was followed again later.

There are later reports of visits by itinerant preachers. Daniel Brenneman about 1872 made a number of visits to the congregation at Masontown, Pennsylvania, which was quite active and aggressive in evangelistic endeavors at that time. One report says[36]: "Daniel Brenneman and family with others, and a goodly number of brethren and sisters from Masontown visited the sacramental meeting in Westmoreland county." This was in June, 1872. It appears that the congregation in Westmoreland county was often passed by when Mennonite ministers travelled through western Pennsylvania, if one may judge from the absence of mention in the reports of their trips. Numerous visits by ministers among the congregations at Masontown, Johnstown and in Somerset county, at various places in Ohio, Virginia, Maryland are reported in the *Herald of Truth,* with no corresponding mention of stopping off in Westmoreland county. The local interest seemed to be at a low ebb. Bishop Henry Yother had moved away from Westmoreland county in 1865. After his wife died he went west to live with his children, first in Illinois, and later in Nebraska. Preacher Martin Loucks died in 1869. John D. Overholt was getting well up in years. His death occurred in 1878. Jonas Blauch was the younger preacher, and he was able to preach in the English language as well as in German. But he moved away from here about the time of Bishop Overholt's death. Apparently the local situation was discouraging, and as time proved no revival in the congregation was possible for another fifteen years.

It was in the years 1873 to 1876 that the preliminary steps were taken which led to the organization of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church Conference. The first preliminary meeting of bishops, ministers, and deacons for this purpose was held in the Stonerville meetinghouse on May 21, 1875. After the death of John D. Overholt and the moving away of Jonas Blauch, the only resident official left in the congregation at this place was the deacon Christian Stoner. In July, 1879, the *Herald of Truth* reports communion services held at Stonerville on May 17, 18 previously, conducted by John Durr of Masontown and Jacob Snyder of Blair county, Pennsylvania.[37] The annual church conference of the district

36. *Ibid.,* Vol. IX (1872), pp. 123, 138, 139.
37. *Ibid.,* Vol. XVI (1879), p. 130.

was held in the Stonerville meetinghouse in the year 1881. At this session the conference decided that the ministers John Durr and Herman Snyder, the latter of Blair county, should be responsible to fill the Westmoreland charge every four weeks alternately. This remained the standing arrangement for regular preaching in the congregation at this place during the last eleven years of the middle period of its history.

Travelling ministers, however, still stopped in Westmoreland county at times during these years. John S. Coffman of Elkhart, Indiana, was then beginning his extensive work as the first Mennonite evangelist in the modern sense. He stopped in the Scottdale community a number of times. Writing of a trip he made to western Pennsylvania in December, 1878, Coffman says[38]: "On the 9th we went to Scottdale, Westmoreland county, stopped with Brother Jacob Loucks, Brother Abraham Overholt, and the aged blind sister, widow of Bishop John Overholt, deceased. At candle light we held services in the church in Scottdale. Next morning we visited the widow Loucks; her daughter, a young sister was lying sick." John S. Coffman stopped here to preach on later occasions. In 1882 he was at Stonerville two days.[39] In 1884 he visited again in Westmoreland county. Of a visit here in December, 1885, he wrote the following interesting report and observation[40]: "My first stopping place was Stonerville, Westmoreland county, Pa., where there is a small congregation which is in charge of the Brethren Herman Snyder and John Durr, who alternately hold services there every four weeks. They both live at quite a distance in opposite directions from this little church, and they have taken upon themselves quite a burdensome task. The members here are very grateful for these services and seem satisfied as far as themselves are concerned, but it is my opinion that with the opposition our people here have against them it will take more effort to build up the Church with any degree of success than can be put forth in holding one or two meetings every four weeks. I am glad, however, that I saw some prospects for the prosperity of the church here if sufficient effort is made in the proper way."

---

38. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI (1879), p. 53. As there was no Mennonite meetinghouse in Scottdale at that date the church referred to was of some other denomination.

39. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX (1882), p. 58.

40. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII (1885), p. 377.

Among the other Mennonite ministers from a distance who are recalled by persons still living as having preached for the congregation during this period were, C. B. Brenneman and C. C. Beery of Ohio, Daniel Roth of Washington county, Maryland. From Somerset and Cambria counties, Pennsylvania, the preachers who occasionally filled appointments were H. H. Blauch, David Keim, Levi A. Blough, G. D. Miller, D. H. Bender. In October, 1886, the annual district conference was held the second time at the Stonerville meetinghouse. The year before this John Durr upon his request had been granted permission by the conference to ordain a minister for the Stonerville congregation. In 1886 the same permission was again renewed. But as the event proved, no minister was ordained for another six years. The following quotation from the *Herald of Truth,* relating to the second conference held at Stonerville, evidently written by John Durr, is of interest[41]: "The greater number of ministers and deacons of the district were present, but quite a number were absent. The usual business was transacted, and no subjects of special interest were considered. Meetings for public worship were held on Friday evening, Saturday, and Saturday evening, and on Sunday the communion was observed. Several meetings were held the first of the week in the U. B. Church in Scottdale. All these meetings were only attended by the members and their families and a few others. There is a good interest among our dear brethren and sisters in this church, and the interest seems to be growing, but a spirit of indifference and possibly opposition is manifested by the members of some other denominations, though some are very kind and seem to wish our church godspeed." The last time the annual district conference was held in the Stonerville meetinghouse was in October, 1891.

Before closing the discussion of this second period of the history of the congregation, two items may well be mentioned for the local interest they reveal in the broader activities of the denomination as a whole. One is the fact that quite a number of persons of this congregation became subscribers to the denominational periodical, the *Herald of Truth* right from the beginning of its publication. The first few years it was the editor's practice to publish the name and address of everyone who sent in the subscription price, and also to indicate whether the subscription was for the English edition of the *Herald* or for the German, or for both. Twenty-four subscribers

41. *Ibid.,* Vol. XXIII (1886), p. 346.

from this congregation are named in 1865 as having paid for the publication, five of whom ordered the German edition, thirteen the English edition, and six ordered both. In 1866 twenty-eight paid the subscription price of the *Herald of Truth,* four for the German edition, sixteen for the English, and eight for both editions. The post office addresses at which these subscribers received the *Herald of Truth* were Mount Pleasant, West Overton, Tyrone Mills, Pennsville, and Connellsville. The other item pertains to the contribution of funds for the relief of Russian Mennonite immigrants. In the report of funds received at Elkhart, Indiana, for the benefit of the numerous immigrants who came from southern Russia to America in the early 1870s it is recorded that the church at Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, sent one hundred dollars to the Russian Aid Fund. The money was sent in, according to the report, by Christian Stoner, who was the deacon in the congregation at that time.[42]

The second period of the history of the Mennonite congregation in the valley of Jacobs Creek, the period of decline and disintegration, was drawing toward the close of its unhappy phase as the one hundredth anniversary of the settlement's beginning came around. Fortunately there were then already visible stirrings and hopeful signs of a reawakening near at hand for the small congregation which remained. The story of the third half century of the congregation's history will prove to be more pleasant and encouraging to contemplate.

42. *Ibid.,* Vol. XI (1874), p. 110.

(To be concluded)

DUTCH MENNONITE DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE FROM PETER PETERS TO JOANNES DEKNATEL, 1625–1753

Robert Friedmann

"Dutch Mennonites have been the foster-parents of American Mennonite settlers even in regard to religious literature." This statement by Ernst Correll[1] will be generously verified in the following pages, in which for the first time the interaction between the spiritual life of Dutch Mennonites of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that of the German-speaking Mennonites will be studied. A mere look into the *Catalogus* of the library of the United Mennonite Church of Amsterdam[2] will be sufficient to convince anyone that the great extent of the literature involved forbids an exhaustive study of the Dutch devotional literature of this period. A selection is inevitable, based on our stated purpose to prepare a history of ideas and attitudes in German and Swiss Mennonitism through the centuries.

At the outset it is worth noting that the Dutch church influenced first the East German and North German congregations, such as Danzig and Altona, where the Dutch language was cherished as late as the end of the eighteenth century. In these communities selected Dutch books became popular and were spread from there to Russia (later to America) or to the Rhineland and the Palatinate (and again later to America). Toward the end of the seventeenth century when the plight of the brethren in Switzerland became intolerable and a great relief work was launched by the brethren in Holland, a lively intercourse of individuals between the two groups was the outcome, and with it Dutch literature entered the Swiss congregations also. And when Pietism was at its peak in the eighteenth century a direct contact came to pass between some Palatinate groups (Peter Weber) and the Netherlands. All the books with one exception — as far as could be ascer-

1. Ernst Correll. "Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature, an Appraisal", *M. Q. R.* IV (1930), p. 294.

2. *Catalogus der Werken . . . anwezig in de Bibliothek der Vereenigden Doopsgezinden Gemeente te Amsterdam* (1919), (357 pages).

tained—had been translated into High German, even prayers and hymns, although some of them, it is true, were not translated before the brethren came to America. We shall treat only those relatively few items out of the vast bulk of literature which became popular outside of the Netherlands. Accordingly we shall deliberately omit great sections of material, such as the numerous Dutch Confessions of Faith, well nigh unattainable in this country,[3] and the merely historical writings.[4] A specialized study would be required to treat adequately the extensive Dutch hymnology of Mennonite origin, yet in the main this task has already been done in a masterly way by Rudolf Wolkan in his *Lieder der Wiedertäufer* (1903). We must also disregard the entire Galenus controversy with its widespread agitation of the minds. But even if we restrict this study to the Dutch devotional literature proper only a small cross section of it can be treated in the present study, namely the production of the period between 1625 and 1753, a production which became popular abroad. By this limitation not more than six authors need to be discussed.

Is it only by chance that our treatment must begin with a sort of pious utopia, the once very popular book *Wegh na Vreden-Stadt (Way to the City of Peace)* by Pieter Pietersz?[5] This book was first published about 1625 and was reprinted at least eight times in Holland. Peter Weber of the Palatinate had it in his library in 1781.[6] Today this book has become almost unknown in spite of a reprint in this country in 1900. Its significance as a literary type, and its onetime influence justifies a careful consideration of it at the beginning of our study.

Pieter Pietersz (1574-1651) was a minister of the "Doopsgezinden" in The Ryp and later in Zaandam, Holland. He was a full-hearted follower of Hans de Ries and the liberal and mild-minded

---

3. See the list in John Horsch, *Menno Simons* (Scottdale, Pa., 1916), p. 134. Also Neff in his article "Bekenntnisse des Glaubens," *Menn. Lex.* I, 157 ff.

4. On the most important historian Herman Schyn see the fine article by De Hoop Scheffer in *Prot. Real-Enzyklopädie* by Herzog-Hauck, 3rd ed.

5. See Schyn-Maatschoen, *Geschiedenisse der Mennoniten*, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1744), pp. 588-596, with portrait; W. J. Kühler, *Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden in Nederland*, Vol. 2, (Haarlem, 1940), p. 171 ff. J. J. Honig, Jr., *Reizen naar der Eeuwigheid, Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, XXXVI (1896), pp. 18-26; *Catalogus*, pp. 228 and 239 (list of Pietersz' writings); See also Bender, *Two Centuries of Amer. Menn. Lit.* (Goshen, 1929), p. 145.

6. *Christlicher Gemeinde Kalender*, 1930, p. 101; see also *M. Q. R.* XV (1941), p. 43.

Waterlanders.[7] He is depicted as a tenderhearted man whose works breathe "a spirit of love and peace, written in simplicity, more with emotion than scholarship".[8] Another author calls his book "eenvoudig, gemoedelijk, zonnig" (simple, mellow, sunny). It is "full of attractiveness and makes the reader joyful. Its message is not obsolete even today."[9] Thanks to a fine and thorough study of the literary type of Christian utopias in the Netherlands by J. J. Honig, Jr.,[10] we understand better the spiritual significance of our book and its place in Dutch Mennonitism. Honig shows the popular predilection through the ages for such "travels to eternity" *(Reizen naar de Euuwigheid)*, and he links them to Bonaventura's *De Septem Itineribus Aeternitatis* (Bonaventura lived 1221-1274). On the other side he believes Pietersz' book to be a forerunner of John Bunyan's more powerful *Pilgrim's Progress* of 1678.

Pietersz used for his fiction the then popular form of a dialogue: Jan has already found the city of peace, after long seeking, while Pieter is eager to learn how this city can be reached. The City of God, the "Heavenly Jerusalem", is treated here as a utopia: the ideal Christian (or more correctly, the ideal Mennonite) church. Its citizens are the ideal Doopsgezinden, the right pious people. Thus, he depicts an ideal which is to be attained "in unity of spirit under the palm leaf of peace."[11] Jan describes the citizens of this City as striving to become perfectly conformed to their great leader Christ; and Jan more and more gets eager to become, likewise, such a citizen. He learns that he must pass through a narrow gateway, and that doing is better than talking. There is little teaching regarding the theological issues such as infant baptism, which God never has ordered, or ban and shunning which must not be exaggerated. (That was the general liberalism among the Waterlanders). Moral instruction is stressed more: one must fight greed and pleasure-seeking and must strengthen peace among men through love and a spirit of conciliation. At the end of his travel Pieter expresses

---

7. See Robert Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* (London, 1876); H. E. Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists* (Philadelphia, 1921); Kühler, *op. cit.*; C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, Ind., 1941), p. 180 ff.; the article "Niederlande" in the forthcoming installment of the third volume of the *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (1941).

8. J. J. Honig, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

10. *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, 1896.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

his happiness about the discourse. He has a feeling as if he and his companion Jan were the two disciples on their way to Emmaus and that Jesus was among them.

No doubt *Wegh na Vredenstadt* is a book of fine Christian spirit and moralism. Yet its spirit is different by far from all that is known in earlier Mennonite literature, and the book certainly deserves the honor of being one of the very first pietistic writings in Dutch Mennonitism. It may be that this also explains its success and its great appeal to later generations. It represented exactly what Christian people then were longing for: morality and edification within the limits of a certain intimate personal experience. The gracious atmosphere of a tolerant and peaceful country now became effective also in Mennonitism.

Nothing has been discovered about possible sources of our book, in spite of a long line of tradition. J. J. Honig, Jr., mentions only one earlier book by a certain Hendrick Jansz van Barnevelde (born 1530), who had passed from Menno Simons to an obscure mysticism, but no reference is made as to possible connections. An analogous Roman Catholic book by a certain Bote van Bolsward appeared almost at the same time, 1625, which could hardly have influenced our author. Yet there exists another Christian utopia of the same time not mentioned in Honig's study which might have had a certain bearing on Pietersz' imagination. In 1619 the Württembergian theologian, pietist, and mystic Johann Valentin Andreä (1586-1654) published in his *Reipublicae christianopolitanae descriptio* an account of an ideal Christian state after the manner of Thomas More's *Utopia* or Campanella's *City of the Sun,* a book of the same mildness and spirit of toleration as that by Pietersz. We do not know whether Pietersz knew Andreä but it is known that the Württembergian author was famous everywhere and very much read.[12] In any case the parallel is striking.

As a matter of fact the idea of such an imaginary journey to eternity continued to attract pietistic-minded people. John Bunyan's book with its strict morals and gloomy temper became eventually the great religious reader throughout English-speaking Protestantism. At this place it may be of interest to note that there is a

12. In 1612 he published in the German language *Die Christenburg,* an epic allegory on the struggle and triumph of the Christian soul which was also widely known. See Schaff-Herzog, *Enc. of Religious Knowledge.*

German counterpart to Pietersz' book which comes from the Church of the Brethren (Dunkers), a book almost forgotten and quite overlooked in the treatments of religious literature of the eighteenth century. It is a small, anonymous book published in 1777 by Christoph Saur, Jr., in Germantown, Pa., under the title *Ein Gespräch zwischen einem Pilger und einem Bürger auf ihrer Reise nach der Ewigkeit.* This book was reprinted in 1792 by S. Saur at Chestnut Hill, Pa. (12mo, 72pp.) and again in 1812 by Ambrose Henkel at New Market, Va., (12mo, 67pp.).[13] Its author was the little known Valentine Mack, one of the sons of Alexander Mack—the first leader of the Dunkers. Although Valentine Mack lived at the Ephrata Cloisters for the greater part of his life, he nevertheless surprisingly had his book printed not there but in Germantown. The book is composed in rhymes (208 stanzas), and contains four dialogues. The first dialogue is one between a pilgrim and a citizen, the second is one between the pilgrim and death, the third is one between the citizen and death, and the fourth is one between the pilgrim and the citizen after the consummation of their journey. The idea of *Memento mori* (think of thy death) is the prevailing one throughout the book. Since the Heavenly Jerusalem as such is not stressed much, one can say that it stands closer to Bunyan than to Pietersz' utopia.

As mentioned above the Pietersz book was a continuing success in Holland where it enjoyed eight editions. Yet we know that it also found many readers among the East Prussian Mennonites who up to the late eighteenth century used the Dutch language and read Dutch literature. In 1790 Pietersz' book was finally translated into High German, and as such continued its influence among the Mennonite emigrants to South Russia. When the Russian Mennonites emigrated to the United States they brought the Pietersz book along with them. Among those German-speaking Russian Mennonites who arrived in 1874 there was a conservative group led by Isaac Peters which established themselves as a separate branch.[14] In 1901 a brother of this group with the initials A. L. F. arranged the

13. Library of Congress. See John Flory, *Literary Activities of the Brethren in the Eighteenth Century* (Elgin, Ill., 1908), p. 320; O. Seidensticker, *The First Century of German Printing in America,* 1728-1830 (Philadelphia, 1893), p. 131; Charles Evans, *Bibliography,* etc. Nr. 24.493. These are only bibliographical references, the book itself has never been studied as far as it could be ascertained.

14. In 1910 this group founded a Conference by the name of "Defenseless Mennonite Brethren", see C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonites* (Berne, Ind., 1920), p. 267 f. In 1940 the name was changed to Evangelical Mennonite Brethren.

publication not only of this one book but of a comprehensive selection of Pietersz' writings, printed by J. F. Funk's Mennonite Publishing Company at Elkhart, Indiana.[15] In the preface A. L. F. explains his motive "to forestall the great danger of seduction to apostasy from the faith of our fathers" and to keep the brethren away from worldly readers. This new reprint truly proves the popularity of our book through a period of two hundred and fifty years. The volume of 498 pages contàins besides the *Weg nach Friedensstadt* (translated in 1790) the *Spiegel der Gierigkeit* (translated in Russia in 1827), the *Spiegel der Barmherzigkeit* and a *Christlicher Sendbrief* (both translated in 1865), and finally a tract *Prüfstein der Menschheit, um für jedermann zu prüfen den Weg seines Lebens, ob er recht gehe nach der Stadt des Friedens, oder hingehe nach Unfrieden und Jammer* (for the first time translated in 1900). The whole book *Für die Liebhaber der Wahrheit aufs neue aufgelegt,* is introduced by a very piously styled biography of Pietersz by a man named B. Fischer. The source of this volume is not known but it is very likely that this German edition goes back to the *Opera,* the complete works of Pietersz, which were first published in Dutch by the author in 1650, one year before his death, and which later passed through two more editions in 1651 and 1666.[16]

The *Mirror of Greed,* the second section of our volume (pp. 122-246), is also in the form of a dialogue, this time between a man greedy after wealth and worldly honors, and a Christian brother seeking only the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. The *Mirror of Charity* (247-321) continues this dialogue to its positive end, full of moral instructions and exhortations. The *Christian Epistle* warns anew against luxury and ostentation (321-328). The most extensive section by far is the last one, the newly translated *Touchstone of Mankind* which teaches every Christian to examine whether his life is directed toward the City of Peace or not. In order to help people to such a self-inquiry the author describes many virtues and likewise many vices in a highly moralistic way. Although it was not yet the time of pietism proper this book reveals a typical pietistic spirit even in single phrases. In it we meet again and again expres-

15. Bender, *op. cit.,* 145: *Peter Peters Ausgewählte Schriften.* Copies at Goshen College Library and Bluffton College Library.

16. *Schyn-Maatschoen, op. cit.,* gives a full description. The Dutch original has the following additional tracts: *The Heavenly Wedding, A Meditation on I Cor. 13:1-8, A Declaration of Faith,* Sermons and Prayers.

sions about the "poor sinner" in his *Sündenschlaf* (slumber of sin) and we hear of the need to become awakened to a full consciousness of human corruption. This mixture of moral instructions and pious exhortations, aimed only at the private sphere of the mind, has apparently had great appeal to the average Christian up to present times. We shall meet this type several times later on.

Pietersz' writings, characterized by Dutch scholars as *gemoedelijk* (mellow), reflect the quiet and settled conditions of the church in Holland which enjoyed freedom and co-operation with the surrounding world. The second book in our survey is likewise of a similar amiable type of *gemoedelijke* imagination. This is Johann Philipp Schabalie's widely known Biblical history, *The Wandering Soul,* first published in Haarlem, Holland, in 1635, and in enlarged form 1638. Originally it formed the second part of a larger book bearing the title *Lusthoef des Gemoets, inhoudende verscheijden geestelijke Oeffeninge. Met noch drie Collatien der wandelnde Ziele met Adam, Noah unde Sijmeon Cleophas* (The Mind's Courtyard of Pleasure, Containing Different Spiritual Exercises, with Three More Interviews of the Wandering Soul with Adam, Noah and Simon Cleophas. Copy in the Goshen College Library). Later it was published independently and passed through at least fifteen Dutch editions between 1638 and 1768, according to the *Catalogus.*[17] It was also translated into High German and in this form was published five times in Europe by 1770. This was an unusually successful book, a really popular religious reader of high value with its wealth of edification, information, and imagination.

Like Pietersz Johann Schabalie (Schabaelje) also belonged to the liberal Waterlanders and was first a minister of the congregation at Alkmaar, Holland, and later a bookseller in Amsterdam. He died in 1656.[18] He was both a scholar and a poet at the same time, and a very productive writer. Eleven books by Schabalie are discussed by Maatschoen,[19] who characterized him as a man versed

17. According to Schyn-Maatschoen, *op. cit.,* forty editions are said to have been brought out up to 1744. This must be a mistake since the list in the *Catalogus* does not equal this number.

18. According to C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century,* Proceedings of the Pennsylvania German Society, XXXV (Norristown, Pa., 1929), p. 346. Unfortunately Schyn does not give any life dates, and Kühler, *op. cit.,* Vol. 2, 1940 does not mention the name of Schabalie at all. A monograph on this interesting man and his work would be worth while.

19. Schyn-Maatschoen, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, p. 581. See also *Catalogus,* pp. 215, 224, 226, 233 and 355.

in many languages. The reformation of man and his edification were said to be Schabalie's main concerns, along with the great ideal of the unification of all Mennonites, to which end he drew up a union confession of faith which saw three editions.[20] As far as is known he was the first man to write a Life of Christ. His *Historische Beschrijving van het Leven onzes Heeren Jesu Christ* came out at Alkmaar first in 1647 with eight engravings, and was twice reprinted, the 1716 edition having 65 engravings.[21] It represents a kind of Gospel harmony in the style of the time, full of moral instructions to the youth, including also many articles of faith. It seems that Schabalie had a special predilection for such summaries and compendiums, for, besides the two above-mentioned works, he wrote a *Summary* or *Short Contents of the Bible* (1629), and another Gospel harmony (1624), and others.

But of all Schabalie's writings, the interviews of the *Wandering Soul* became his most famous book. This book has many charms, even for the reader of today. It is a free paraphrase of the stories of the Old and New Testament, and goes even beyond this, telling the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies until the year 109 A. D. It is not only a paraphrase of the Scriptures, but includes also productions of Schabalie's own imagination, fanciful embellishments of the holy text, which unfortunately were taken for real by most of his readers. So effective is the style that one would scarcely recognize that the book was composed in a very scholarly way, using twenty or more sourcebooks of ancient (e. g. Josephus) and modern origin, according to the reference list which Schabalie so conscientiously added to his book. The description of *The Wandering Soul* which C. Henry Smith gives in his *Immigration of the Mennonites to Pennsylvania* (1929) is so well-done that we can not do better than to quote the main paragraph of his summary.[22]

> The wandering Soul was a disembodied spirit appearing on Earth only at stated times and remaining long enough each time to learn the history of the world from the lips of three old men whose lives spanned a good share of the period covered by the narrative—Adam, Noah, and one called Simon Cleophas.[23] Adam was already 930 years old when the wandering Soul

20. His *"Vereenigingh van de principale Artijkeln des Geloofs . . . (de) Waterlanders, Vlamingen en Duitschen"* appeared in 1640, sec. ed. 1674; third ed. 1739.

21. Only known copy in this country at Bluffton College M. H. L., Bluffton, Ohio.

22. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-348.

23. According to Eusebius, Simeon Cleophas was the second bishop of Jerusalem. He was said to be a cousin of Jesus. He died about 109 A. D.

appeared for the first interview on what had happened in the Biblical world up to that time (30 pages). A thousand years later the wandering Soul appears again, this time to visit Father Noah, who is now 950 years old, and who was well acquainted with such old timers as Enos, Methuselah, and others who lived after Adam. From Noah, the Wandering Soul heard the marvellous story of the flood, the building of the Tower of Babel, and other events, of which the narrator was either an interested eye-witness or in which he was active participant. The story is interestingly told as if the narrator were an eye-witness of the scenes depicted, but occasionally Schabalie forgot his historical perspective as in the instance where he had Noah include among the languages spoken in the building of the Tower modern English and German as well as the ancient Hebrew and Arabic.[24] (54 pages)

The Wandering Soul disappears again now for two thousand years and does not come back to earth until after the fall of Jerusalem. By this time the day for old men is past evidently, for this third interview was held with Simon Cleophas who was only 120 years old at the time but who already felt that his remaining years were but few. Simon could speak of the main event in this interview, the fall of Jerusalem, from first hand information, but for the other two thousand years he was forced to rely entirely upon written records of others (327 pages).

The technique of the book is the popular form of a conversation, its character a kind of mirror of virtues full of moral admonitions. Its style is often verbose and sentimental, but its spirit is a finely Christian one of peacefulness and emotional warmth. This was the first popular Bible history of modern times and there is no doubt that it exerted a great educational influence through the centuries, even when it had to compete with the very popular although very different *Bible Stories* by Hübner (after 1714) which will be discussed in a later context.

A certain obscurity enshrouds the German translation of the Wandering Soul. The Goshen College library has the fifth German edition of 1770 with the following note on the title page: "In niederländischer Sprach beschrieben, hernach aber in die hochteutsche Sprach übersetzt von B. B. B., Basel, bei Johann Conrad und Johann Jacob von Mechel, Gebrüdern, 1770." No information is available concerning the year of the first edition, but it probably appeared about 1700 or 1710. It was the Lancaster historian I. D. Rupp who in 1834 guessed that the initials B. B. B. stand for the name

24. "Als sie zusammenkamen, einander zu unterrichten, so redete der eine hebräisch, der andere lateinisch, der dritte griechisch, arabisch, indisch, tartarisch, mohrisch, schiitisch, Englisch, Duitsch (German) und also fort." German ed. 1834, p. 83. On the same page it is told that "Thuiscon zog in Deutschland." The translator into English, I. D. Rupp, omitted this nonsense (ed. 1834, p. 95), nevertheless he repeats that Thuiscon, a son of Japhet, emigrated into Germany.

of the Mennonite bishop, Bernhard Benedict Brechbill (1665-1720), and this view was also adopted by Bender.[25] Brechbill was one of the outstanding Swiss Brethren of his time.[26] His life story is truly a moving one. In 1709-1710 he experienced severe tribulations in the prison at Bern, after having been expelled from Switzerland twice previously. In 1710 he became an agent of the relief work of the Dutch Doopsgezinden on behalf of the Swiss Brethren, helping them during their emigration. Eventually, in 1717, he himself led an emigrant group to the new world, and settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Three years later, in 1720, he died, having accomplished much for his brotherhood. He visited Amsterdam several times and mastered both the Dutch and German languages. It is very likely that it was he who translated Schabalie's book some time between 1699 and 1714, and had it published, not unlikely in Holland. He also wrote the remarkable preface "to the gentle reader", explaining therein the intention of the book and the translation. It was "calculated especially for young people that they may view themselves as in a mirror. From this book the Christian may see how unstable the kingdoms of this world are, but (he may also see) the virtues and vices of mankind" and the different ends to which they lead. He hopes that through the reading of this book many will be incited "to become wandering souls, travelling through the wilderness of this world, with heart and mind yearning toward the heavenly treasures and that every reader will be edified by the wisdom and knowledge that leads to godliness. . . ." Indeed in its new German form the book achieved this aim to a notable degree.

The German *Wandering Soul* found a strong response in America. In 1763, long after the death of the noble translator, Christopher Saur, the noted Dunker printer of Germantown, Pennsylvania, published the first American German edition of the *Wandelnde Seele* (463 pages, 12mo).[27] This and the following three editions (until 1805) are completely identical copies of the European edition. Bender lists nineteen editions between 1763 and 1919. In 1834 an English translation was achieved by the afore-mentioned well-known

25. Bender, H. S., "The Literature and Hymnology of the Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania." *MQR* VI (1932), p. 159.

26. See article by Neff in *Menn. Lex.* I, 258 (spelling Brechbiehl). also J. C. Burckholder, "Benedikt Brechbill," in *Papers read before the Lancaster County Historical Society,* May 6, 1927.

27. Bender, *op. cit.,* p. 4, and Flory, *op. cit.,* p. 312.

historian I. D. Rupp, and this translation was five times reprinted until 1874. It is worth noting that this is perhaps the only book by a Mennonite writer to reach a wide public in America outside of Mennonite circles.

Next in time in the development of Dutch devotional literature is the collection of sermons by Joost Hendriex, a minister of the Doopsgezinden at Amsterdam (1572-1644).[28] His *XXXVIII corte en stichtelijke Predicatien. . .* were edited for the first time shortly after his death in 1644. Later, in enlarged form as *XL . . . predicatien,* this book went through five more editions up to 1668.[29] This proves the high appreciation of these sermons which were used throughout the country as a formulary for sermons until the middle of the nineteenth century. Peter Weber had a copy in his library[30] and the 1773 letter of American Mennonite bishops to the Mennonites in Holland[31] mentions it too. The fact that printed sermons were used, either as models for new ones, or to be literally read from the pulpit during the Sunday service, as is vividly described by J. J. Honig, Jr. in his essay *Een Zondagvoormiddag onder de fine Mennisten te Balk,*[32] indicates both the decrease of a true religious spontaneity and the predilection of the new time for edificatory *(stichtelijke)* sermons. The section on printed sermon literature in the Dutch *Catalogus* covers nine pages (239-248). We shall meet this type several times more as we go along. Strangely enough the Hendricx collection seems never to have been translated in spite of its popularity on both sides of the ocean.[33]

Tieleman van Braght, the author of the *Martyrs' Mirror,* also has his right to a place in our present survey. It is true that his main work, the *Bloedig Toonel* of 1660, must not be classified as edificatory or pietistic literature, but rather as an outstanding example in the great line of tradition of martyr books which reflect the old Mennonite and Anabaptist spirit,[34] and it accordingly does not lie

28. See *Menn. Lex.* II, 282f.; Schyn-Maatschoen, *op. cit.,* 646 ff. with portrait. At both places his numerous writings are enumerated.

29. See also *Catalogus,* pp. 239 and 240.

30. See note 6 above.

31. See John C. Wenger, *Franconia Mennonite History* (Scottdale, Pa., 1938), p. 401.

32. *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen,* 1892, p. 75.

33. This is the only book which could not be described on the basis of a personal inspection. Although used in America, no copy could be found in the libraries cited.

34. See the article by Neff, "Märtyrerbücher", in *Menn. Lex.* III, 49-53. C. Henry Smith in his *Menn. Immigration,* gives a full description, pp. 316-330.

in the scope of the present study. But the *Martyrs' Mirror* by no means exhausts the far-reaching educational and spiritual influence of this man. Tieleman van Braght, who died at the early age of thirty-nine (1625-1664), was one of the leading personalities among the conservative "Sunnists" who opposed the Galenus innovations.[35] Due to his activities the spirit of the forefathers was preserved, though in a somewhat modified way, which shows anew that the trends of a time can not be completely evaded. Like Hendricx, van Braght collected his written sermons, which however did not appear in print until six years after his death, in 1670.[36] Of much more lasting significance was another book which shows van Braght as the great teacher and educator of the youth toward the right moral standards of a Christian life. His *School der zedelijke deugd (School of secular virtues)* was first published in 1657, three years prior to the *Martyrs' Mirror,* and was successful to such an extent that in 1824 a twelfth edition came out under the simplified title *School der Deugd.*[37] We know also that Peter Weber had a copy of this book in his library. In 1743 a German translation was made by "J. K." under the title *Für die Kinder der Christen geöffnete Tugendschule,*[38] but it was apparently less successful than the Dutch original. The *School der deugd* gives in 98 lessons in a catechetical manner "an edification of everybody's soul and godliness" *(een Stichtelinge van ieders eigen Ziel en Zaligheid).* It is a very sound book of fine Christian intentions. "When I saw," van Braght writes in the preface, "the deplorable devastation which in life and manners of the youth was breaking through and rapidly increased, I felt that for the care of the souls entrusted to me, I am compelled to put to paper the means by which youth might be prevented from evil and brought to good, virtuous, godly morals. I omit all disputable doctrines, I deal only with points like these: life, death, resurrection, last judgment, punishment of the godless, and reward of the godly." For instance, at the question "why do you live?" van Braght arranges his answers after the following scheme: how has one to serve God in (a) thoughts, (b) words, and (c) works? Then: how

35. See *Menn. Lex.* I, 252; Schyn-Maatschoen, *op. cit.,* pp. 534-540. Also C. B. Hylkema, *Reformateurs* (Haarlem, 1900-1902).

36. *51 Sermons on Different Texts, (Een-en-vyftigh predicatien over verscheyde Schriftuer-plaetsen)* (Amsterdam, 1670), with portrait.

37. Copy in the Goshen College Library.

38. According to the *Katalog der Kirchenbibliothek der Mennonitengemeinde zu Danzig* (1869), p. 14. No other reference has been found.

has youth to behave toward God, parents, neighbors, oneself, etc.? "Make use of this book," he concludes, "for practice at every possible opportunity, in the morning, at noontime, and in the evening." Thus, the *School of Virtue* became the standard book of Mennonite moral teaching. At the same time it was also a book of devotion.[39]

Nearly at the same time as the *School der deugd,* in the year of the great schism in Dutch Mennonitism in 1664, a German book was published in Amsterdam which was to become one of the most influential books among Mennonites both in Europe and America. It was composed by Tieleman Tielen van Sittert, and its title, long-winded as then was customary, reads as follows: *Christliches Glaubensbekenntnus der waffenlosen,/ und fürnehmlich in den Niederländern (unter dem Namen der Mennisten) wohlbekannten Christen; wie auch etliche christliche Gebete eben derselben Glaubens-Bekenner; wobei gefügt sieben geistliche Lob- und andere Gesänge/ aus einer Anzahl von 400 eines gottseligen Lehrers selbiger Glaubensbekenntnus gezogen/ und zur Probe anher gestellt. Als auch noch ein Anhang zum unwidersprechlichen Beweise/ dass gemelte Glaubensbekenner sich im Leben und Lehren/ viel anders finden/ als man bis anher/ durch Urkunden/ von ihnen urteilen wollen.* T. T. V. S. Amsterdam, bey Johan, Paskovium, im Jahre 1664.[40] This book brings the first German translation of the Dortrecht Confession of Faith, drawn up by Adriaan Cornelisz and accepted in 1632 by most of the Dutch Mennonites (conservative wing) and later generally used among South German, Alsatian, and almost all American Mennonites.[41] The translation was made by van Sittert, who also added three further parts to it, namely, collections of prayers and hymns and a sketch of Mennonite history, thus presenting a real handbook or companion for Mennonites, with the essentials of their heritage. It is very different from the older and much more powerful

---

39. Neff lists it also as a catechism, *Menn. Lex.* II, 470.

40. Seven pages preface and 148 pages text, 8 vo. See R. Wolkan, *Lieder der Wiedertäufer* (Berlin, 1903), pp. 115-118. Articles by Neff in *Menn. Lex.* I, 159, 460, 663. It was a mistake by Neff to suppose that van Sittert was only the printer (p. 159).

The preface excludes any doubt as to the authorship of van Sittert as translator, compiler and historian. No other author comes into consideration. The printer was J. Paskovius. Surprisingly the otherwise very reliable and complete reports in *Schyn-Maatschoen* do not give any information about this man whose name is only incidentally mentioned. Copies of our book are in Goshen College Library and Scottdale M. H. L. See also *Catalogus,* p. 172, with a list of European editions, and H. S. Bender, *Two Centuries* . . . pp. 1, 6, and 7, with a list of American editions in English and German.

41. See John C. Wenger, *Glimpses of Mennonite History,* (Scottdale, Pa., 1940), p. 55, translation, *ibid.,* pp. 84-110.

Enchiridion oder Handbüchlein by Dirk Philips of 1564, which still was in use, but no doubt Sittert met the need of a changed time in a fortunate way and by this merit his book was often reprinted in Europe[42] and carefully preserved in America where quite a number of German and English editions were printed.[43]

With regard to the origin of the idea of composing such a compendium it has not been noticed as yet that there exists a model which van Sittert very likely followed. This is a similar book published in 1660 by Prussian Mennonites in the German language under the title, *Confession oder kurzes und einfältiges Glaubensbekenntnis derer, so man nennet die vereinigten Flämischen, Friesischen und Hochdeutschen Taufgesinnten oder Mennisten. Ausgegeben durch die Gemeinde in Preussen im Jahre Christi 1660.*[44] This book contains three parts: first a confession proper, then a short catechism of thirty-five questions and answers called *Kurze Unterweisung aus der Schrift,* and third a *Formulier etlicher Gebete* almost identical with the corresponding part of van Sittert's book save for the fact that the latter includes more items. A hymn (*Lebt friedsam, spricht Christus, der Herr)* forms the conclusion of this nice little book. If we look at it as a whole we recognize with surprise its far-reaching correspondence to the van Sittert manual. Both have first a confession (with 15 and 18 articles respectively), and both have the same prayers (13 and 18 in number). Where van Sittert has a collection of seven hymns, the Prussian book has one only (but of the same collection). There is but one major difference: the Prussian book has a short catechism while van Sittert brings a historical sketch in refutation of evil reports about the Mennonites. However this difference was overcome later on, since Russian editions of the Prussian book in the nineteenth century printed the van Sittert sketch, and American editions of the van Sittert book printed the Prussian catechism. The one manual became in-

42. Amsterdam 1664, 1691, 1711. There is also an edition of 1686 without place. The 1711 edition was very often reprinted, and also translated into French. Another edition is that of the Mechel publishing house, Basel, 1822. The *Güldene Aepffel in Silbern Schalen,* 1702 and 1742, has also a reprint of our book somewhat changed and enlarged.

43. The German edition as appendix to Roosen, *Christliches Gemütsgespräch,* from 1770 onward; the prayer part first printed in the 1790 edition of the *Gemütsgespräch,* (Bender, *op. cit.,* pp. 6 and 7). The English translation of the confession and the historical sketch was first published in 1727. The story of this translation is told in John C. Wenger, *Franconia Mennonite History* (Scottdale, 1938), p. 48.

44. See article, "Bekenntnisse des Glaubens," by Neff in *Menn. Lex.* I, 159 f, and "Katechismen," *ibid.,* II, 470.

fluential among the Eastern European Mennonites (Prussia-Russia), the other became the standard book among South German and American Mennonites (Palatinate, America), while Dutch folk turned to other lines. Both books developed their full influence primarily abroad: the one in Russia,[45] the other in America.

As a matter of fact we can not be absolutely sure whether van Sittert knew this Prussian manual or not, although it is highly probable, as there was a living intercourse between the Danzig community and the Amsterdam church, and mutual influence was the natural outcome. However the van Sittert manual is an independent work and deserves our full attention. In contrast to the Prussian book it is not anonymous but names the compiler and author. It has also an extensive and prominent preface in which we learn the author's ideas and reasons. Thus we get a fine direct insight into the new mentality of the Dutch church with its broadminded spirit of toleration and adjustment, in spite of the fact that this book does not come from the liberals as do some of the books discussed above, but from the conservative wing. Van Sittert tells us that he had the idea of making this German translation of the Dortrecht Confession for Christian readers in general in order to acquaint them with what Mennonitism really stands for ("damit jedermann davon Wissenschaft kriegt und ein besseres Vertrauen haben möchte"). Then he goes on to explain why he completed his work by adding some prayers and hymns. "With regard to the prayers a good many of our folk consider that some prayers—although they are not absolutely necessary—do nevertheless fit well into our service. Accordingly they are widely used in public as well as in silent worship. . . . We therefore present a few for that purpose. . . . As the evening and the morning prayer and the prayer before and after meal, of the Reformed Dutch Prayerbook, are scriptural and useful for edification, our folk in this country use them often and teach them to our young people." The same tolerant viewpoint is advocated also regarding the use of hymns, seven of which form the third part of the book. ". . . Many of our folk who speak or understand German, or know how to read or sing it, use very much the scriptural hymns by *Luther* as we do not like to reject or think little of anything we understand to be in accordance to God's word, it may come from

45. P. M. Friesen, *Die Altevangelischen Mennonitischen Brüderschaften in Russland, 1789-1910, im Rahmen der Mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte* (Halbstadt, Russland, 1911), p. 669.

whatever Christian, it makes no difference to us. Whosoever has something truly right and praiseworthy to give, we like to share it, and we care more for the glory of God than for the favor of men. . . . " We quite agree with Rudolf Wolkan[46] when he says with regard to this passage, "a viewpoint like this would have been impossible a century earlier."

As mentioned before, the Confession proper in van Sittert's book is followed first by a collection of prayers. The title of this part runs as follows: *Formulier etlichen Gebäthe, welche die versamblete Gläubigen/ oder ein jeder absonderlich, nach Gelegenheit der Zeit und Sachen/ Nothwendigkeit (für Gott) mit Andacht und gebeugten Knien des Hertzens gebrauchen mögen.* From the preface we learn something about author, origin and intention. The heading says: "Der einmütigen Brüderschafft in Preussen/ und den Gläubigen überall in Christo versamblet/ wünscht L. C. die überflüssige Gnade Gottes/ durch denselben unsern Herrn Jesum Christum." Thereafter the author *L. C.* goes on professing: ". . . As I have seen that almost every denomination has its own formulary of prayer, intercession and thanksgiving, I felt urged, in promoting the glory of God and the edification of our fellow Christians, to compose the forms of prayers (without thinking less of the prayers of other folk) and have them printed and sent to you, ye beloved together."

The question as to the author L. C. has never been raised before. After thorough investigation I believe that he can be identified beyond doubt as *Leenaert Clock,* in German spelling Leonhard Klock, the well-known redactor of the *Concept of Cologne* of 1591 and the successful hymnwriter.[47] In 1625 Clock published a book in Holland under the title *Forma eenigher Christelijker Ghebeden,* which is the original of our remarkable prayer section. Unfortunately we know nothing more about it than the title since the article in the *Mennonitisches Lexikon* gives no bibliographical hints and the *Catalogus* and the monographs do not mention this work at all. Consequently there is no opportunity to check its particulars at present. From the preface quoted above we can only guess that the main purpose in drawing up these prayer formularies was to give the

46. Wolkan, *op. cit.,* p. 117.

47. See articles "Clock" by Vos in *Menn. Lex.* I, 364 f. and "Konzept von Köln" by Hege, *ibid.* II, 545 f, also Wolkan, *op. cit.,* 113-117 and 155-156.

so much exposed brethren in Prussia a book of devotional practice.[48] We also do not know whether van Sittert himself made the translation from Dutch to German, or whether Clock did, himself a born German and naturalized Hollander who however composed all his hymns in his adopted (Dutch) language. At any rate, text as well as heading *(Formulier)* are identical in both books, the anonymous Prussian edition of 1660 being prior to the Amsterdam edition of 1664. In number however the books differ, the latter printing eighteen prayers, while the Prussian book has only thirteen, lacking some of the most outstanding items. The arrangements, also, are somewhat different, and the preface is completely omitted in the 1660 edition.

As a whole this prayer section is of exceptional significance for the intellectual and spiritual history of Mennonitism, and its influence proved to be far-reaching. It became a sort of standard in its line. In character it expresses a quite different spiritual attitude from that of earlier Mennonitism and demonstrates the obvious parallel between printed prayer books and printed sermon books (see above). Both replace the religious spontaneity of earlier periods and both provide for the people devotional material which was to shape the new pattern of piety then (1625) in the making. The wording *Formulier (Forma, formulary)* moreover suggests a noticeable stiffening of the religious life. The question is at hand: does our collection represent a formulary in the proper sense of an ecclesiastical manual like the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, or is it only an introduction to personal devotion, or a mere encouragement and support to such devotion? Such things were of course completely unknown among Mennonites in earlier days. At another place I intend to enter upon a detailed discussion of these points and by more extensive material make a decision possible.

The third part of van Sittert's book contains seven hymns "out of four hundred of a godly teacher." Rudolf Wolkan in his unsurpassed *Lieder der Wiedertäufer*[49] devoted considerable attention to these four hundred hymns and their author. We learn to our surprise that the hymns were composed by the same afore-mentioned

48. It should be noted that it is only in the first edition of van Sittert's manual of 1664 that we read the passage "der einmütigen Brüderschaft in Preussen. . . ." All later editions, including the Prussian version, omit the word "Preussen" and write only "Der einmütigen Brüderschaft."

49. *Op. cit.*, pp. 115-118.

Leenaert Clock, whose *Groote Liederboeck* with 435 hymns was published in 1625, in the same year as his *Forma.*[50] The seven van Sittert hymns are taken from it and translated. Since one of them is also to be found in the Prussian book *(Lebt friedsam, spricht Christus der Herr,* the fifth hymn in Sittert's arrangement) the same question arises as with the prayer section: was van Sittert the translator or Clock himself? And what was van Sittert's relation to the Prussian book? We are not able to solve such questions with the material at present at our disposal.

The last part of the manual is, according to the special preface, apparently an original work by van Sittert. It represents the first (though short) history of Mennonitism in the German language written by a Mennonite. The title reads as follows: *Anhang der Confession, Fürstellende einen kurtzen auszführlichen Bericht; Von wegen der vermeinter Junckheit unser Religion, des Waffen und raachlosen Christenthumbs und dessen Zustandt.*[51] This historical sketch of less than forty pages was very popular and was therefore reprinted from that time on in nearly all Mennonite confessional books and catechisms both German and English. It was also in favor among the Russian Mennonites.[52] This fact has prompted a certain confusion as to the origin of this useful outline, written almost at the same time as van Braght's much more prominent *Martyrs' Mirror.* In the present study, primarily concerned with the devotional literature, there is no place for a full discussion of Mennonite historiography in the seventeenth century, but the van Sittert sketch is proof that historical interest in the great era of the first forefathers never ceased among the brethren. It gave strength and confidence to remain true to one's heritage even if one could not withstand all changes. The material and viewpoints of well-nigh all studies in Mennonite history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were taken almost exclusively from one and the same then famous source: Jakob Mehrning's *S. Baptismi Historia, das ist Heilige Taufhistoria,* etc.

---

50. *Catalogus,* p. 269.

51. In 1727 an English translation was accomplished by a board of elders (Wenger, *Franconia History,* pp. 48 and 316) and published in Philadelphia as an appendix to the *Confession of Faith.* The title was translated as follows *"Appendix . . . giving a short and full account of (the Mennonites) because of the imagination of the newness of our religion, the weapon- and revengeless Christendom and its being,"* See Bender, *op. cit.,* p. 1, where the sketch is erroneously ascribed to Gerhard Roosen.

52. *Menn. Lex.* I, 159 and Friesen, *op. cit.,* p. 669.

Dortmund, 1646 and 1647 (1128 pages).[53] Mehrning, himself not a Mennonite, derives Anabaptism for the first time in modern historiography from the Waldensian movement of the Middle Ages, thus giving the Mennonites a background of very old standing. The Waldensian origin theory became and has remained a slogan up to recent times and served as an effective counter argument against the accusation of alleged Münsterite origin.

If we finally look at the Van Sittert book as a whole we recognize that, although written by a man of medium significance, it reveals a good sense for the most actual needs of the church in his combination of confession, prayers, hymns, and history, all in plain, simple language. For this reason it continued to be a popular manual or companion through the centuries. When it was translated into English, prayers and hymns were omitted, but the historical appendix kept its usefulness also in the new language.

With the growing wealth in the Netherlands the flow of publications continued and may be best observed in the thicket of the *Catalogus*.[54] However, outside of Holland itself not much is heard of influential new literature from Holland. There is only one outstanding author, namely Herman Schyn (1662-1727), physician and theological leader of the conservative "Sunnists" and chief historian of Mennonitism, who also became well known and much read abroad. His great relief work for the persecuted Swiss brethren after 1710 will never be forgotten,[55] likewise his famous and still indispensable sourcebook, the *Geschiedenisse der Mennoniten,* 1723, later enlarged by G. Maatschoen (1744-1745). We find it in Peter Weber's library and in almost every Mennonite historical library of today. Like van Sittert Schyn also follows Mehrning in linking Mennonites to the Waldenses. His other books, a conservative catechism (German edition of 1743), and three volumes of sermons, had less influence and it may suffice merely to mention them.

The last, but most vigorous personality in our history of Mennonite piety in Holland, is the only author of the eighteenth century

53. *Menn. Lex.* III, 65. Mehrning's book is the translation and enlargement of a book by Joh. Montanus who actually started the thesis of the Waldensian origin of Anabaptism.

54. The use of this *Catalogus* is not at all simple. It has neither an index nor an alphabetical nor a chronological arrangement, and it is sometimes a puzzle to find the right citation.

55. See the article by De Hoop Scheffer in Herzog-Hauck, *Prot. Real-Enzyklopädie,* 3rd ed.

to be discussed: *Joannes Deknatel* (1698-1759),[56] the pietistic preacher of Amsterdam. The pattern of his religion was rather different from the spirit of old Mennonitism. His concern was the general work for an inward Christianity, the fight against "the earthly-minded and dangerous century" of the enlightenment and deism, a work very much like that of his friends *Zinzendorf* and *Wesley*. He did not restrict his labors to his Mennonite flock, but addressed his sermons and books to everybody willing to accept the call for inner rebirth and revival understood as a quiet piety and inward edification. He was a very productive writer and his books are still appreciated among Mennonites. Neff, in his article on Deknatel in the *Mennonitisches Lexikon*[57] lists sixteen Deknatel books, some of them also in German translation. The *Weg zur Seligkeit* (1757) appealed particularly to the pious congregations in the Palatinate. His catechism *Anleitung zum christlichen Glauben . . .* was a leading work in Holland (editions 1746, 1747, 1764) as well as in Germany where a translation was widely used and often reprinted between 1756 and 1829. Luther, Calvin, and Menno Simons appear in it on equal level. It became the very textbook of the new piety. A formulary for preachers to be used in Divine Service, a real model of all books of that kind, is also ascribed to Deknatel, although it was anonymously published.[58] There are further, three volumes of sermons, and we know already that this type of literature was of highest influence in those days in stimulating all kinds of religious activities. One volume of these sermons was also translated into German in 1757 under the title *Acht Predigten über wichtige Materien* (332 pages),[59] dealing with the one great theme of salvation by faith alone. It was reprinted in the United States in 1835 and a part of it again in 1883.[60] One can easily imagine that all these books were really instrumental in shaping the new piety among Mennonite people, and assimilating them to the great common way of modern Christianity. Peter Weber was but one example of this effect.

---

56. See Friedmann, *Spiritual Changes in European Mennonitism, MQR* XV (1941), p. 38 f., articles by Neff in *Menn. Lex.* I, 398 f. and Leendertz, in *Geloof en Vrijhed* (1887).

57. *Menn. Lex.* I, 398 f.

58. *Menn. Lex.* I, 14, not listed in the biographical article.

59. Copy in Goshen College Library.

60. Bender, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 and 98.

A service of great value was Deknatel's edition of some of the writings by Menno Simons in 1753. A German translation of it was published in 1758 under the title *Kurzer Auszug von Menno Simons Schriften, verfassend unterschiedliche merkwürdige Verhandlungen und wörtliche Auszüge aus seinen Werken* (279 pages)[61]. This is the book which is sometimes referred to as *Der Kleine Menno*. In its first half it contains well-selected treatises and essays, but not Menno's chief work, the *Foundation*. In its second half it brings selected paragraphs chosen according to a theological scheme of Deknatel. The intention of this part is to present to the religious reader selections out of Menno Simons' works which fit into the new trends of piety without offending anyone by the sharply polemical statements of ancient controversies and by the strictness of primitive Christianity as it was understood in early days. A good orthodox theologian and exhorter for a more living faith was thus presented, but the great leader of a brotherhood which actualized a true Christian life and admirably withstood the agonies of persecution was dropped, and with this the spirit of Anabaptism. A pietistic Menno Simons was produced. It is not surprising that by these qualities our book—the first popular German edition of Menno Simons' writings[62]—became a great success. It was through the mediation of Deknatel that Jung-Stilling, the famous pietist, writer, and physician, learned to know Menno Simons and his ideas; and Jung-Stilling was likely the main channel through which the name of Menno Simons became more widely known in German Protestantism.[63] The new Menno Simons of Deknatel and Stilling was no shock any more but only a welcome supporter of the new pietistic Christianity in its struggle against secular philosophy.

---

61. Copy in Goshen College Library.

62. The edition of several Menno writings by Gerhard Roosen in his *"Unschuld und Gegenbericht"*, Ratzeburg, 1702, had a rather restricted spread.—There exists however a very early German translation of Menno Simons' complete works "Gedruckt im Jahr 1575", but without the printing place or the name of the translator. It is a beautifully printed 16mo book of almost 900 pages and must have been widely read in its time among South German Mennonites, as G. Bossert's source book *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, Bd., I. Herzogtum Württemberg* (Leipzig, 1930), shows. The authorities discovered this book in the hands of many arrested Anabaptists (1582, 1583, 1596, . . .). Later on we do not hear any more of this book; it seems to have been forgotten.

63. See Friedmann, *op. cit.*, p. 44 and *Menn. Lex.* II, 446. It is worth noticing that all copies in the Goshen College Library have both works by Deknatel bound in one: the eight sermons and the Menno Simons edition (German).

BOOK REVIEWS

Studies in Mennonite City Missions. By ALTA MAE ERB. (Prepared under the direction of the Mission Study Course Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House. 1937. Pp. 224. Illustrated. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.

For many years the author taught courses in elementary education and now she has brought into the present work the result of her training and her wide experience in the class room. The book contains a series of thirteen studies for missions classes and is designed to cover in a brief way the city missions and charitable institutions now operated by the (Old) Mennonite Church in the United States and Canada. The author begins with an introductory chapter in which valuable suggestions are offered as a guide to the leader who teaches the course. In this brief section is given a list of periodicals and books that may be used for outside reading. To this list might be added the new manual for missionaries published within the last year. Other suggestions, helpful to the instructor, are also given. The first study has to do with the "Why of City Missions." In it the social, moral and religious conditions that make mission fields of our modern American cities are set forth. Following this chapter the author takes up the study of missionary activities in the large centers of population in both the United States and Canada, giving a brief history of each institution, its aims, its accomplishments and a list of workers at each place.

This book brings together a goodly amount of information and presents it in a very usable form. It is a valuable collection of material not only for mission study courses, but also for topical study in young people's meetings and other gatherings of a similar nature. Interest in study is stimulated by questions and suggested projects in almost every chapter. The blank pages at the end of each study may be used for outlines, notes, maps, or pictures. The book is written in excellent style, filled with illustrative material that adds greatly to its interest and usefulness. Another valuable and helpful feature of the book is the pictures. Photographs of each city mission and of all the charitable institutions are included. There are also pictures of some of the workers as well as of some of the members or groups of members of the institutions and missions. This book is a valuable addition to the missionary literature of the Mennonite church.

Goshen College S. C. Yoder.

Africa Calls: Junior Study. By ADA M. ZIMMERMAN, (Catherine Leatherman, Chapters VIII, IX, X). (Prepared under the direction of the Mission Study Course Committee in co-operation with the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1936. Pp. 145. Illustrated. Paper, 45 cents; cloth, 75 cents.

Missions always have to do with the human being. It is spiritual need that ever makes evangelism and missionary effort necessary. No treatise on this subject can be separated from the people, the soil on which they live and the surroundings out of which they grow. To arouse an interest among

Christians in bringing the gospel to these needy, neglected souls has been the problem of Christian leaders ever since the days when Christ walked the fields of Palestine to call the lost to God. This is also the aim of the author of this little volume. The story of a people, their land, their surroundings and their need is not always most effectively told in a formal didactic way. It is sometimes better told in the form of a travelogue, or in graphic word pictures drawn from real life situations, or in episodes taken from the experiences of those who have labored on the field. The latter is the manner in which the author of this little volume so effectively tells the story of Africa and its need.

Beginning with the first chapter, the reader is taken via airplane up the Nile Valley, through the deep tropical forests, and over the grassy lands to the lovely settlements of the Boers in the British possession of South Africa. Then follow succeeding chapters describing the people of Africa, their manner of life, their religion, and their need. One is taken into the markets and cities of the country, into the homes of the people, to their dwelling places, to their weddings, and their funerals, where he is made to see what they believe, what they eat, how they make their living, how they live, and how they die. But the author also tells in lively narrative form of the great souls who opened the paths that lead to God. She relates the work of the "Trail Blazers": Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, and Mary Slessor of Calabar. Out of the footsteps of these heroes of faith came a line of newborn men who caught the torch and passed it on to others: William Wade Harris, Canon Apolo of Uganda, Khama the Good, Bishop Crowther, James Emman, Kwegyir Aggery.

The more recent successors of this eminent company is the group of Mennonites who in 1934 undertook the evangelization of a section of Tanganyika, and have since done a creditable work among the natives of their territory. Chapters VII to IX deal with Tanganyika, the people, the missionaries and the work of the Mennonites. The book is written in a moving, interesting style and is well illustrated, easily read and readily remembered. While the book is primarily intended for juniors it can be used with profit by other age groups and will be read and appreciated by all classes.

Goshen College S. C. Yoder.

Exalting Christ in the City: Or the Why, What, and How of City Missions. By J. D. Mininger. (Prepared under the direction of the Mission Study Course Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House. 1937. Pp. 215. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.

This valuable book comes from the pen of one, lately deceased, who gave years of his life to the task of exalting Christ in one of the large cities of our country. The title suggests the purpose of his ministry to the people among whom he moved as a Christian brother, a friend in need, and a devoted follower of the Christ whom he sought to exalt as he went on his way. The book is in reality a review of the methods, plans, ways and means by which the author did his work. This volume of 215 pages is divided into three parts. Part I: *The Why of City Missions.* In this section are given Biblical reasons why the gospel should be preached to the lost of the city. It also deals with the personal responsibility of Christians to carry forward

the work which their Master began. Part II: *The What of City Missions,* deals with the task of the city missionary and the fundamental object of emphasis—Christ, the Redeemer. J. D. Mininger built his entire ministry around the person of Jesus and His teaching, and that of the apostles. The Lord's definition of the missionary task was ever in his mind and is upheld throughout this section. Part III: *The How of City Missions.* This section treats the ways and means of carrying on the work and of methods to be employed to make one's work effective.

Careful and logical outlines characterized all of the author's work whether it was a sermon, a tract, a book, or his daily task. This volume bears the distinctive stamp of this feature. It, however, does not consist of a mere skeleton or a dry, logical arrangement of topics under heads and subheads. Under each division or subdivision one finds most valuable comments, illustrations, suggestions and other helps, many of which are drawn from his own experiences, and all of which add to the usefulness of this material. While this volume was primarily intended as a manual for city mission workers, all others will find much help and many useful suggestions as they peruse its pages. The reader will be able to secure here a fine conception of the kind of pastor and city missionary the author was, and by reading this little volume he may gather inspiration and help to press forward in the difficult task of evangelizing the cities in which the needs are great.

Goshen College S. C. Yoder.

Our Mission Work in India. By M. C. Lehman. (Prepared under the direction of the Mission Study Course Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House. 1939. Pp. 112. Illustrated. Paper, 40 cents; cloth, 60 cents.

This little volume comes from the pen of Dr. M. C. Lehman who gave many years of service to Mennonite missions in the Central Provinces of India. The book was written in colaboration with a number of students in the author's course in missions while he taught at Goshen College, and is one of a series of books for use in mission study classes in the Mennonite church. The contents of this book are divided into four parts. I. What Was. II. What Is. III. What Made the Difference. IV. What Problems Remain. The author's purpose as stated in the introductory chapter, is to survey the work of the American Mennonite Mission in India with a view to determine:

a. The results of the work and the expenditure.
b. The methods used in the attainment of such results as will be found.
c. What lessons of guidance of future missionary policy and encouragement for further effort may be learned.

In the first part the author gives an all too brief, but good, description of India, its location, its people, their religion, and their way of life. He also describes vividly the conditions that existed in the area allotted to the Mennonites before the mission was begun. In this is included a brief history of the founding of the work during the latter part of the nineteenth century. This section is filled with sufficient details to hold the attention of both reader and student. In Part II the author looks back over the years of his service and notes the changes that have taken place in the community life

since the mission was begun. He observes the churches and institutions that have grown up and their effect upon the people spiritually, socially, and physically. This part of the story is interestingly told as the author takes the reader from station to station and gives a brief history of each one. Part III deals with the causes that wrought the change. "God's ultimates are never material," says the author. Schools, hospitals, dispensaries, and institutions of charity have all been notable factors in bringing about the transformation, if it may be called such; but fundamentally, the forces that gave direction to all these efforts and brought about all these changes, were spiritual.

In the concluding section the author raises some very pertinent questions such as the relation of the Indian church to that of America, the application of distinctive doctrines of the American Mennonites to the Indian church. The continuation of support from America and many other questions of a similar nature. The book is well written and deals with material that is of highest importance to those who would support and serve the work in this field. It is stimulating and interesting and contains many useful maps and illustrations that are exceedingly helpful to all students and readers.

Goshen College S. C. Yoder.

Mennonite Pioneers: Biographical Sketches of Some of the Leading Men and Women in the Mennonite Church Who Have Served in the Institutions of the Church in the Home Land. By JOHN SYLVANUS UMBLE. (Prepared under the direction of the Mission Study Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House. 1940. Pp. 211. Illustrated. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.

The Mennonite church is not given to eulogy, consequently it is only recently that she has given much consideration to her history or said much about her leaders. In more recent years, however, some of the younger scholars within her communion have, through their study in colleges and seminaries, become greatly interested in her past as well as in the lives of the men who founded, led and directed the church in its growth and development. The book under consideration is in part the outgrowth of this spirit, although its writing was directly prompted by the committee that was appointed to set up a course of study for the purpose of stimulating missionary interest. The author does not attempt to cover the entire period of the church's history in America, but rather that period since the rise of missions and institutions supported and controlled by the (Old) Mennonite church.

The book is well written and contains biographical sketches of the following eleven men and women: Joseph Shellenberger Shoemaker, Executive and Beloved Counsellor; Abram Metzler, Disciplinarian and Friend of Children; Melinda Martin Ebersole, Pioneer Missionary and Friend of Girls; Tobias Ehst Moyer, Friend of the Aged; Menno Simons Steiner, Organizer and Consolidator; George Lewis Bender, Treasurer of Missionary Organizations; Jacob Andrews Ressler, Pioneer Foreign Missionary; Levi Mumaw, A Christian Financier; Christian K. and Elvina Brenneman, Ministers of Intercession; Lydia Magdalene Heatwole, the Praying Nurse; Arthur Tobias Moyer, Friend of the Colored Man. These biographies are

naturally very brief, but are examples of what can be done in a modest way to perpetuate the memory of those whose lives were vitally connected with the church they served. Other names no less worthy and inspiring to the youth of the church should have been included in this study. No doubt this would have been done had space been available. It is the hope of the reviewer that further volumes of this kind of material may follow, for:

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

Goshen College S. C. Yoder.

Ohio Mennonite Sunday Schools. By John Umble. Goshen, Indiana: Mennonite Historical Society. 1941. Pp. XVI, 522. $2.00.

In the history of the spiritual and intellectual awakening of the Mennonite church during the past half century or more, the rise and development of the Sunday-school movement has played an important role. Preceding by some years the interest in missions, education, and young people's work in general, it would seem that the early Sunday schools must have furnished a chief source of inspiration for these later movements.

This phase of church history has received but little attention thus far from Mennonite church historians. A pioneer work in this field is an exhaustive treatise on the Sunday-school movement among the (Old) Mennonites of Ohio, written by John Umble, of Goshen College, and published by the Mennonite Historical Society of Goshen College.

The book is divided into three parts of which the first, dealing with such general observations of early Sunday-school affairs as their early uncertain beginnings, principal objectives, and primitive methods of teaching, is perhaps of greatest interest to the general reader though not always to the specific local participants.

To the pioneer Sunday-school workers, still living, the objections raised against the dangers of Sunday schools, voiced by the fainthearted and fearful brethren of a generation ago, have a familiar ring. The institution, they said, is an innovation and a departure from the practices of the fathers, and, like all new things in religious practice, needs to be carefully scrutinized; it will lead to pride among the young people, because they may feel that they know more than their elders. Among the Amish who held their church services only on alternate Sundays, the fear was expressed by those who favored these Sunday interims, that the time-honored practice of visiting their relatives and friends on this rest day might be seriously threatened if the Sunday school were to be offered as a substitute.

In the early sixties of the past century, the period that saw the general rise of the Sunday-school movement among the Mennonites, church worship was still carried on in the German language. The fact that the teaching of German to the young people, among whom a knowledge of the German tongue was fast disappearing at this time, was made one of the major objectives in many of the early schools, frequently softened the bitter opposition that otherwise might have delayed the movement for some years.

And so, like many another new religious venture, at first regarded with suspicion but later with appreciation, the Sunday school, too, frequently had to come into the church through the back door. The first meetings were

often held in the public school building; if in the meetinghouse, then on alternate Sundays when there were no church services, or in the afternoon, as far removed seemingly from the time of the regular services as possible, to emphasize the fact no doubt that the new institution was in no way a rival of the church itself; often the early promoters were laymen instead of ministers.

Instruction at first was confined to the children; there was no provision for adult classes. The older people, if they accompanied their children to the place of meeting, spent their time out of doors, or if attending the exercises were regarded as "spectators," or visitors. The children were "scholars." Usually teachers were poorly prepared for their work, and teaching methods most primitive. Where the teaching of German was not the main objective, the memorizing of Scripture verses became a leading purpose, rewards in the role of "tickets" being offered as an incentive to effective performance.

And who of us, those of us who remember the Sunday-school days of half a century ago, does not remember the busy secretary, the busiest and most imposing official of the whole Sunday school, with an imposing desk and writing materials conspicuously placed on the pulpit platform, devoting his entire time to the collecting of correct statistics, mostly useless and often of little significance—the number of "scholars" and teachers present, and the "spectators"; the Scripture verses memorized; penny collections from each class; number of hymns sung; speeches by visitors, and other special features, and according to one record book at least, the condition of the roads and the state of the weather on that particular Sunday?

With all these early feeble efforts, however, and primitive methods the Sunday school in course of time became a most powerful factor in the development of the spiritual life of the church.

Like most other progressive church ventures, the Sunday school, too, owes its existence largely to a small number, here and there, of courageous and far-seeing religious leaders with larger visions for the church than the average, such men as David Plank, of West Liberty; Nicholas Johnson, one of the earliest advocates of the Sunday school in western Pennsylvania, who crossed the state line to encourage the opening of the first schools in eastern Ohio; John K. Yoder, and his son C. Z. Yoder, of Wayne county; John M. Brenneman of Elida; "Grosz" Mose Miller of the Amish settlement in Holmes county; and many other devoted leaders who helped to carry on the work in later years.

All of these interesting details are well told in this book.

Part two, the main part of the volume, contains an exhaustive account of the various Sunday schools throughout the state in later years. One marvels at the immense amount of detailed and seemingly accurate information the author has been able to gather here. It must have taken years of painstaking research and repeated visits to the various local regions to accumulate and arrange this mass of material. Any one who has ever had anything to do with the organization or conducting of a Mennonite Sunday school in Ohio will find his activities, some of which he may himself have forgotten long ago, faithfully recorded here.

The third division deals largely with later organization matters, and especially with the development of the Sunday-school conferences.

Professor Umble is not quite sure just what part the Sunday-school movement played in the general awakening of the Mennonite church; wheth-

er it was an important contributing factor to the passing of the German, the inauguration of the mission and educational interests, and other progressive movements, or whether all of these together owed their common development to other causes. But whether cause or effect, the rise of the Sunday school, and especially the organized efforts of the Sunday-school conferences, played a most wholesome role in the spiritual and social development of the entire denomination within the past fifty years. Without the Sunday school it is doubtful if we would enjoy these other institutions today.

The book is well written. Professor Umble has a fine appreciation of literary values, and a discriminating sense of what is of human interest. From the pen of a less skillful writer the monotonous repetition of mere names, dates and facts regarding matters of organization, might easily degenerate into a mere tabulation of unrelated and uninteresting details, as dry as history is supposed to be, and with no attraction for the general reader, and of interest only to such as find their personal names here recorded. But the author has seasoned the whole narrative with the spice of interesting details of social practice, and incidents of human interest, that keep the story interesting throughout.

In fact the book is more than a mere history of the Sunday school; it includes a cross section of much of the religious and social life of the Mennonites of Ohio for the past two generations.

The work is a valuable contribution to the history of the religious and educational life of the Mennonite people; and opens up a new and profitable field of research for Mennonite historians. It likely will be followed by other regional and specialized studies in this same field.

The book, however, confines itself to the (Old) Mennonites of Ohio only. The other branches of the Mennonite church are not included—the General Conference Mennonites, the Defenseless Mennonites, and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, all of which have numerous congregations in the state.

Bluffton, Ohio C. Henry Smith.

Who's Who Among the Mennonites. Edited by A. Warkentin. Bethel College, Kansas: The editor, 1937. Pp. 221.

The purpose of this work according to the editor "is to submit to our homes information which often is desirable in our days and shall become very valuable in the future." It is a collection of over five hundred brief life sketches of individuals in responsible positions. It includes some who once were Mennonites, but are no longer. An attempt was made "to get a well balanced representation of the different groups and occupations," but the work is admittedly far from complete. This is due to the fact that some were probably overlooked, but more largely to the fact that "many did not send in their 'Data Sheet.'" It appears that particularly among the (Old) Mennonites, the largest body of all, there are many omissions. The editor considers this edition just a beginning, however, and has expressed the hope that readers will co-operate in making a possible future edition more complete.

The data usually included on each individual is interesting. Here you learn where a person was born, where he lives, his education, his positions, membership in learned societies, if any, articles and books written, if any, and some odd bits of information. You learn for instance, to take a few

cases at random, that one person was at one time a sub-station operator for the Winona Interurban Railway Company at Goshen, Indiana; that another moved with his parents over the "Covered Wagon Trail" from Illinois to Kansas in 1873; and that another has "spoken" more than once a day on an average for twenty-four years, and during the same time has traveled in the United States and Canada a distance equal to twenty times around the earth.

A few mistakes were noted with regard to the church affiliations of a few individuals, and the abbreviations used in this connection are in a few cases a bit confusing. The book includes a classified directory of Mennonite institutions and business firms controlled wholly or in part by Mennonites. This list also is incomplete. Despite the encyclopedic character of this work, it makes interesting reading, or at least browsing. It constitutes a useful, ready-at-hand source of information for various occasions.

Goshen College Willard H. Smith.

A History of the Settlement of German Mennonites from Russia at Mountain Lake, Minnesota. By FERDINAND P. SCHULTZ. Minneapolis: The Author, 1938. Pp. 119.

This history of the Mennonite settlement at Mountain Lake, in southwestern Minnesota, is the author's published thesis which he submitted at the University of Minnesota for the degree of Master of Arts. Beginning the study in a seminar on western history, the author is of the opinion that "a microscopic study of the development of individual communities from the beginning of settlement . . . will facilitate the synthesis of frontier history, and incidentally American history, from the ground up." Hence such a work is of interest to the general historian as well as to those directly or indirectly connected with the community. Though the author himself is a Mennonite from this community the account is objective but not unsympathetic. The Mennonites who came to Mountain Lake were of those thousands who came from Russia to America in the 1870's and 1880's. While the great majority of these immigrants found homes in other parts of the United States and Canada, about 1800 of them between 1873 and 1880 settled in this community. The usual efforts of government and railroads to attract immigrants, are well portrayed in this work.

After giving a brief résumé of general Mennonite history, in which the Mennonite search for religious liberty is brought out, the author tells the story of the coming of the Mennonites. The area in which they settled was little more than past the frontier stage. A few Americans were already there. The Mennonites, however, came in such large numbers that they soon controlled and dominated the subsequent development of the community. The remaining chapters of the book describe the development of the community in its economic, religious, political, social and cultural phases. The story of this development is one of conflict between those forces on the one hand that wanted to maintain conditions of life as they were in the past, and on the other those that wanted to make more of a compromise with the American environment. This resistance to change has naturally been greatest in the religious and cultural realms. People, accustomed to migration for conscience' sake, are not quick to give up their faith. But even here some changes are in evidence, and the community, according to the author, "is slowly becoming less and less distinctly Mennonite and more and more like the average agricultural community of the Middle West."

The book is well organized and quite well written. The author's materials were gleaned from personal interviews with pioneers of the community, unpublished local documents, government documents, newspapers and periodicals, books and pamphlets. The work is scholarly and well documented, and contains a bibliography and index. Few criticisms need be offered, but a few statements might be questioned. It might be questioned, for instance, whether "Mennonites generally believe" that conversion comprises "the sum-total of Christian experience" (p. 92). Nor is it quite correct to say (p. 89) that during the World War all efforts to obtain concessions from the government for conscientious objectors failed. For as the author himself implies later on the draft law did provide for noncombatant work and later still greater concessions were granted by the war department to those who refused noncombatant service.

Goshen College Willard H. Smith.

The World Goal of Bible Missions. By I. E. BURKHART. (Prepared under the direction of the Mission Study Course Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities). Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House. 1940. Pp. 201. Paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.

All too many people hold the idea that what is called mission work began with Pentecost and that prior to that time people had no responsibility for each other's spiritual welfare save that of their own group. The author of this little book rightly contends that from earliest times it was the mind of the Creator that the knowledge of Himself and His plans for the race should be propagated and kept alive by persons or groups of persons telling these things to others. He starts with pre-Noahic and pre-Abrahamic times and shows by the Scriptures that such was His purpose. Paul was not the first missionary to the Gentiles, nor was Jonah. The ultimate purpose of Israel was missionary. Through it the surrounding nations were to be led to a knowledge of God. Whatever methods, ways, or means were to be used in those days need not concern us here. We no longer live in those remote times nor do we have those people to deal with. Whatever their failures or successes were, they cannot be changed now, but the responsibility of making God known to those who live in our day devolves on those who live now and not on those who lived in the past or who shall live in the future.

The author has done a very good piece of work in showing what should be the goal of missions in the world and sets forth what he considers Biblical ways and means of accomplishing these ends. Each of the thirteen chapters is preceded by an outline of its subject matter which is then discussed intelligently and Biblically. It is arranged in logical order and is well written in simple language and in an effective style. The material covered by the author is the kind that Christians need to be familiar with in order to come to an understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures regarding man's relation to the world in which he lives. This book is nicely bound in red fabricoid and deserves a place in every Sunday-school library in the Mennonite church. It is arranged for use as a text in mission study courses, in winter Bible schools, and in classes in congregations. Pastors, Sunday-school workers and leaders of mission study groups will find this volume helpful in leading their people to an understanding of the goal of missions as it is found in the Bible.

Goshen College S. C. Yoder.